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Gen. James Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps,
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The newest generation of wartime veterans, those of the post-9/11 era, continues the legacy of men and women who have distinguished themselves in service to our nation. Photo illustration by Lucas Carter

ROAD WARRIORS

The American Legion Riders lead the national convention parade through downtown Baltimore on Aug. 30.

Photo by Lucas Carter

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.3 million members.

These wartime veterans, working through 14,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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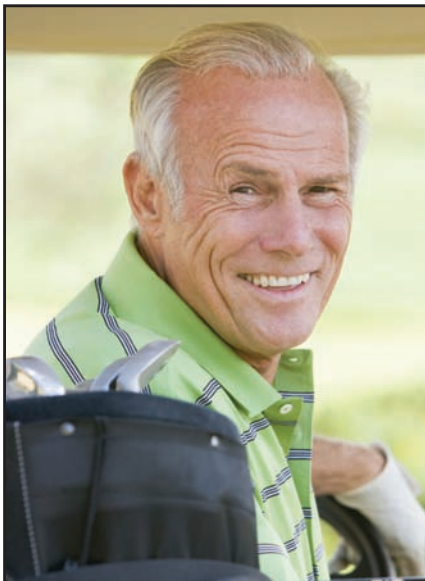
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'Lights of Liberty'

As a veteran who served two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, I was very pleased with the entire September issue and especially Wilem Wong's article giving kudos to the work done by civil affairs soldiers. I deployed with the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion out of Webster, N.Y., to Mosul, Iraq, Nineveh province, and served as the task force liaison officer (LNO) to the Independent Election Commission of Iraq (IECI) from June to December 2005.

It was a challenging assignment, but due to the hard work of all the units there and those dedicated Iraqis, we reached a 70 percent voter registration level, and the constitutional referendum and national elections were a great success. The success in these elections paved the way for the 2009 elections, and although it seems all wasted now, I'm sure the Iraqis have not forgotten that taste of democracy.

— Jeff Houston, Wadsworth, Ohio

I served 24 years in the Navy, active duty and reserve, and was discharged in 2008. After that, while working with the Department of Agriculture, I had an opportunity to apply for – and was accepted to – an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) in Iraq. This was a brilliant initiative started by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It was also one of the military assets discussed in Wilem Wong's "Lights of Liberty" article.

I was first stationed at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cashe South in Baghdad province. With the help of the 82nd Airborne, we built more

than 1,200 hoop houses (we call them greenhouses) for Iraqis to grow vegetables and get back on their economic feet. We also started the Green Mada'in Association for Agricultural Development (GMAAD), a cooperative for farmers to buy their own seed and supplies. When the FOB closed, I was transferred to Baghdad as an agricultural resource.

The experience was one of the most valuable of my life. I often wonder how GMAAD and my friends are doing. I believe that ISIS and other such groups would not be as much of a problem if we had stayed.

— Glenn Brown, Country Club Village, Mo.

'Our War'

I have been a member of The American Legion for over 40 years in three different states. The September issue is, in my opinion, one of the best issues you have printed. The detailed accounts of various encounters by our troops inform people of what actually happened, instead of the news version: "Several servicemembers lost their lives in action today. Now for a story and video about efforts to save a deer from drowning."

– Claude M. Mercer, Malta, Ohio

Timeline of terror

As the commanding officer of USS *Cole* when it was attacked by al-Qaida terrorists Oct. 12, 2000, I stay abreast of reporting about the ship and crew even though 15 years have passed since that fateful day in our nation's history.

Your brief mention of *Cole* incorrectly lists 39 injured sailors. The accurate number of injured is 37, which is the number of Purple Hearts issued by the Department of the Navy following the attack. I specifically refer to that number in my book "Front Burner."

The Navy originally (and inaccurately) published the figure of 39 and, despite my pointing out this discrepancy on numerous occasions, has never corrected the record.

– Kirk S. Lippold, Carson City, Nev.

The September issue lists several dates relating to the war on terrorism, beginning with the holding of 52 U.S. hostages in Iran for 444 days in 1979. In

reality, our problem in the Middle East began when we rearmed Israel after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The Arab nations were so angry that OPEC ordered an embargo of all oil to the United States. It wasn't totally successful, but OPEC discovered it could control the price of oil.

– Robert Loscheider, Grand Rapids, Minn.

Federal protection for unborn

Rep. Rosa DeLauro says *Roe v. Wade* "has been settled law for more than 40 years" (Big Issues, September). She must be deep in deadly denial. An example of "settled law" is the 19th Amendment, which provided for women to vote. *Roe v. Wade* is radically *unsettled* law. Our nation's moral conscience will never allow something that is wrong to become "settled law."

– Donald J. Tobkin, Detroit Lakes, Minn.

'The Cannabis Question'

I appreciate the lively discussion about this article (Vet Voice, September). I am a retired medic of 20 years. As a caregiver and a military person, I always felt marijuana was wrong. As a civilian, I worked 19 years as an anesthesia technician. I saw drug abusers, cancer patients and chronically ill patients. Because cannabis is illegal, no research was being done on it.

Now, as a cancer patient with bouts of nausea, it would be the medical stuff I need. Only once have I found some; what a relief. I don't like losing control.

CBDs are the ingredients that would help, not THC's. Cannabis helps children with seizures,

cancer patients with nausea, PTSD, and in my case – if I could find it – melanoma. I am retired, I garden and I enjoy life. I have no intention of being in a "pot-crazed frenzy."

I am more than willing to be the test rat to see if CBDs can help a melanoma patient. In Alaska, surrounded by water, I have no choice. Cannabis cannot be sailed, mailed or flown to my island. My cancer is aggressive and has no treatment. I am doing all that modern medicine can do, with the best health-care team with the Alaska VA and the Seattle cancer docs.

Kudos to Gary Carpenter for raising the question.

– Jan Storbakken, Craig, Alaska

'Green River Gamble'

I was very pleased, and a tad jealous, to read Ken Olsen's article about the revival of Tom Whitmore Post 28 (August). The idea of a family-oriented post is an excellent one to attract active members. I have sought out Legion posts to join in the Chicagoland area but have not been successful, mainly due to being a busy working mother. I would relish the opportunity to take my kids to hang out at a post like Post 28, where we could all be involved. Here's to hoping that some other posts go that route and the Legion spotlights their efforts as well.

– Gina A. LoGalbo, Chicago

Editor's note: In "More Than Names" (May), the all-Japanese-American 442nd should have been identified as a regimental combat team, not a division.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing. Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.

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Walk for those who marched for us

In their book “The Bonus Army,” authors Paul Dickson and Thomas B. Allen pay tribute to the thousands of World War I veterans who marched to Washington to petition for benefits they believed were owed for their service, only to be chased away by soldiers under federal orders.

“American history is punctuated by moments and history that become prisms through which larger events are better understood – the Boston Tea Party, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, the Alamo, John Brown’s Raid,” they write. “The march of the Bonus Army belongs in such company. But its significance has been obscured by time, even to its direct beneficiaries – the millions of later veterans whose bonus would be the GI Bill and the benefits that have followed to the present day Millions of Americans have since peacefully marched on Washington in support of various causes, their way paved by the veterans of 1932.”

As a former high school history teacher, it is in this spirit that I am calling on all departments to conduct their own American Legion Walk for Veterans. Though far less contentious than what many of our Legion founders experienced 83 years ago, these events can send a similar message of support for those who have served.

We kicked off this initiative in Manchester, N.H., Sept. 12. Clad in distinctive gold T-shirts, dozens of American Legion Family members and supporters joined me on the 2.5-mile round-trip walk from Post 2 to Veterans Memorial Park. The youngest was a 12-year-old Sons of The American Legion member. The oldest was 90-year-old World War II veteran Lionel LeBlanc, who fought in the South Pacific.

A retired Air Force master sergeant, LeBlanc wanted to honor not just his fellow veterans, but those men and women fighting today. “They’ve been shortchanged,” LeBlanc said. “We allow refugees to slip into the country to receive benefits while veterans sleep under bridges.”

Most Americans have genuine appreciation for veterans and desire to help them. They just don’t know how. By joining us at our walks, they can help raise public awareness about a variety of veterans issues.

We walk to bring attention to those who struggle daily with hardships related to traumatic brain injury or PTSD. We walk because we know that VA reform will happen only when Americans hold elected officials accountable and demand veterans be treated with the respect they’ve earned. We walk to remind employers that the best way to thank a veteran is to hire one. We walk because we believe recent defense cuts have been dangerously irresponsible and threaten to send our military into harm’s way without the proper training and resources.

If you’ve participated in one of our walks, thank you. To see if there’s one happening near you, contact your department headquarters or visit www.legion.org/walkforveterans.

I strongly believe we should walk not for ourselves but for those who have marched before us. In war and peace, America’s veterans have sacrificed time and again for our freedoms. An American Legion Walk for Veterans is the least we can do for them.




National Commander
Dale Barnett

MEMORANDA

VETERANS DAY

Describe your post’s Veterans Day observance and other activities with a story and photo, and submit it to the Legiontown page. Then, share it with your friends on social media.

 www.legion.org/legiontown

BLOOD DRIVE

Following up a successful blood drive at the 97th National Convention in Baltimore is the Legion’s annual Holiday Donor Blood Drive, from Nov. 26 to Dec. 31. Nearly 79,000 pints of blood were donated last year by Legion Family members.

 www.legion.org/security/blood

GET OUT THE VOTE

Nov. 3 is Election Day. The American Legion’s “Get Out the Vote” program encourages Legionnaires to get involved in the electoral process by working at the polls and helping others register and vote. Submit stories on your post’s Election Day activities to Legiontown.

 www.legion.org/vote

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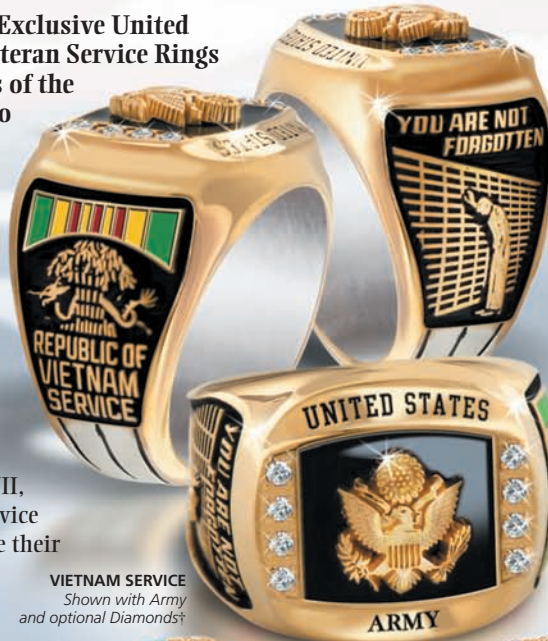


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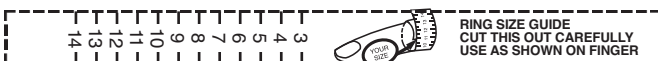
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Fathers
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Gold Star
Families

At an American Legion post presentation in Parkersburg, W.Va., Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams asked Gold Star Mothers to raise their hands. He then thanked them, paying tribute to the 10 women for their sacrifice.

Afterward, a teary-eyed man lingered behind and approached Williams. "I said, 'Sir, is there something I can do? Is there some way I can help you?'" Williams recalls. "He said, 'Dads cry too.'"

The man, a widower, had recently lost his only child in the war in Afghanistan.

"We talked for quite some time," Williams says. "I thought, 'We've got to focus on the family rather than just the mother. We know mothers suffer more than anybody else. They grieve more than anybody else. But the whole family grieves if somebody is lost.'"

That encounter gave Williams a new mission: honoring families of the fallen by establishing a Gold Star Memorial in every state. So far, six have been constructed and more are planned.

Learn more about the initiative online at www.hwwmohfoundation.org.

BRANCH OF SERVICE Marine Corps (1943-1945), Marine Corps Reserve (1948-1949, 1954-1969)

MOS Infantry

RANK Chief warrant officer 4

POST Post 177, Barboursville, W.Va.

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Boys State speaker (2000-present)

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Iran nuclear agreement



SUPPORT

Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind.

■ Donnelly is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

As an Indiana senator, I have the privilege of working on issues that directly affect the security of Hoosiers, our nation, our military and their families. I also have a solemn obligation to help keep our country safe.

As ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, I have long supported efforts, including talks and sanctions, to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. After an exhaustive assessment of our options – briefings with military leaders, foreign policy experts and Middle East allies, as well as conversations with Hoosiers on both sides, including former U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar and former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton – I announced that I supported the agreement.

The day may come, with or without this deal, when we are left with no alternative but to take military action to prevent Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold. The burden and danger would, as always, be on the shoulders of our men and women in uniform who put their lives on the line for our country. If that day does come, and I must take a vote on whether to authorize military force against Iran, I owe it to our armed forces and the people of Indiana to have used all other options before we would consider putting any of our servicemembers in harm's way.

While I share the concerns of the deal's critics about what may happen 10, 15 or 20 years from now, I cannot in good conscience take action that would shift the potential risks of 2026 and 2031 to 2016. A nuclear-armed Iran poses an unacceptable threat to the security of the United States and its allies. Only one thing can truly guarantee Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon: our steadfast resolve to stop it.



OPPOSE

Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz.

■ Flake is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In early July, the administration announced that an agreement had been reached between the P5+1 and Iran resulting in a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Since that time I have tried to do due diligence on the deal, taking

advantage of hearings, briefings and one-on-one discussions with experts. While I supported the negotiations that led to the JCPOA from the beginning, I determined that I could not vote in support of this deal.

The JCPOA offers some benefits in terms of limiting Iran's ability to produce sufficient fissile material for a nuclear weapon for a period of time. But these are outweighed by severe limitations placed on Congress and future administrations in responding to Iran's non-nuclear behavior in the region.

While Congress has received assurances from the administration that it does not forfeit its ability to impose sanctions on Iran for behavior on the non-nuclear side, these do not square with the text of the JCPOA.

If the deal had been presented to the Senate as a treaty, senators could insist on so-called RUDs, or "Reservations, Understandings and Declarations," to clarify confusion. But since the JCPOA is being presented as an executive agreement, RUDs are not an option.

Iran has already stipulated that it will view the imposition of new or similar sanctions as a breach of the JCPOA. Given the administration's reluctance to challenge Iran's interpretation of the JCPOA before it is implemented, I am concerned there will be even more reluctance to confront Iran on its behavior after implementation. As written, this agreement gives Iran leverage it currently doesn't have.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Supporters say the administration's deal will prevent Iran from developing and deploying nuclear weapons for 15 years.

Critics say that, despite assurances, the agreement doesn't allow for new sanctions on Iran's non-nuclear activity.

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Deaths prevented during the same period

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Cases of polio in the United States per year before a vaccine was introduced in 1955

Source: WebMD/CDC



Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



NOT BY DIET ALONE

Weight-loss surgery helps patients manage diabetes.

BY BETH W. ORENSTEIN

More than 29 million Americans have diabetes, a chronic condition in which the body doesn't make any or enough insulin, or use it well. A hormone, insulin acts like a key unlocking the body's cells so they can take glucose (sugar) from food and use it as a source of energy.

Uncontrolled, diabetes can lead to a host of health problems. Diabetes often worsens with time and requires patients to take medication more often and at higher doses to control their blood sugar.

While you don't have to be overweight to develop diabetes, it does put added pressure on your body's ability to use insulin properly – and thus leaves you at higher risk of developing diabetes.

Studies show that for people who are overweight, even a small loss (5 to 10 percent) can improve the body's ability to use insulin more effectively.

For people who are very overweight or obese or who have other health risks, the answer

may actually be weight-loss surgery.

"People who undergo weight-loss surgery have seen their diabetes improve dramatically," says Anita P. Courcoulas, director of the Minimally Invasive Bariatric Surgery program at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center).

Courcoulas is the lead author of a study published in July's *JAMA Surgery* that found weight-loss surgery in conjunction with diet and exercise to be more successful in controlling type 2 diabetes than lifestyle changes alone in people who have a body mass index (BMI) of between 30 and 40. A BMI of 30 or more means you are obese and probably need to lose weight, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The study looked at people with diabetes who underwent gastric bypass or gastric band, and those who simply relied on diet and exercise. The study

See **DIABETES** on page 16



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DIABETES *continued from page 14*

found that about 40 percent of patients who had gastric bypass had few or no signs of diabetes after three years, while 29 percent of patients who underwent a gastric band procedure were in remission at that time. No one from the group that made only intensive lifestyle changes reported similar success at three years. While the UPMC study was small (61 people), it adds to evidence that supports the use of gastric surgery procedures to combat diabetes and shows that the procedures are effective over time, Courcoulas says.

Doctors aren't sure why gastric bypass surgery works to improve blood sugar control, but they theorize that the procedure may promote the release of gastrointestinal hormones or cause changes in bile acids by altering the bacteria in the intestinal tract. "When food is rerouted away from the majority of the stomach, something changes on a cellular level to have the pancreas produce insulin again," Courcoulas says.

Not everyone is a candidate for gastric bypass surgery. Since the 1990s, the American Diabetes Association has recommended weight-loss surgery for patients with a BMI of more than 35 with a high-risk condition such as diabetes or high blood pressure. The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) says weight-loss surgery should be considered "an alternative treatment option" in patients with a BMI of between 30 and 35 when their type 2 diabetes cannot be adequately controlled by lifestyle and medication, especially if they have other major heart-disease risk factors.

Health insurance companies generally require patients to try to lose weight on their own – and fail – before they foot the bill for weight-loss surgery, which typically costs up to \$26,000. Patients also have to commit to maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle for the rest of their lives and recognize the potential risks and complications of surgery.

Beth W. Orenstein, of Northampton, Pa., is a freelance medical writer and regular contributor to Living Well.



Cholesterol check

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), an arm of the Department of Health and Human Services, urges Americans to avoid plaque buildup in blood vessels and possible heart attack or stroke by having regular cholesterol checks if they meet the following criteria:

- You are a man 35 or older.
- You are a woman of any age, or a younger man with risk factors for heart disease or stroke such as smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, excess weight, and a family history of heart attacks or strokes before 50 in male relatives or 60 in female relatives.

A total cholesterol level of above 240 is considered high; below 200 is considered desirable. To prevent or control high cholesterol, AHRQ recommends regular physical activity, a healthy diet and maintaining a healthy weight. Your doctor may also prescribe a cholesterol-lowering medicine.

Start a conversation on safe opioid use

In September, the Kaléo pharmaceutical company and a consortium of pain-management organizations launched a national opioid-safety campaign, along with a website intended to encourage discussion between doctors, patients and caregivers.

"America Starts Talking" seeks to raise awareness about the growing problem of accidental overdoses and even accidental deaths from prescription drugs. ER visits from overdoses have grown almost fourfold in the past seven years, to about 136,000 per year.

The campaign recommends opioid users keep handy an injection of naloxone, a medication used to reverse the life-threatening effects of other opioids, especially in overdose situations.

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 america-starts-talking.com



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Media error adds to VA troubles

BY TOM PHILPOTT

“More than 238,000 of the 847,000 veterans with pending applications for health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs have already died, according to an internal VA document provided to The Huffington Post.”

That’s a news lead to alarm a nation. And it did in July, when it appeared below an equally alarming headline on a popular news website.

It also stirred up critics who would like to see the VA health-care system dismantled and have veterans rely on private-sector physicians and hospitals, arguing that wait times would be shorter.

The problem with the Huffington Post headline and lead was that the “internal document” on which they were based doesn’t support them. The VA inspector general (IG)’s “Review of Alleged Mismanagement at the Health Eligibility Center,” published in September, revealed not massive neglect but rather a data and accounting mess at the VHA’s Health Eligibility Center (HEC).

The HEC determines eligibility for VA health care and processes enrollment applications. But data the enrollment system maintains, the IG found, are “generally unreliable.” On Sept. 30, 2014, the data showed, 867,000 claims were classified as “pending” because there was no final determination on status reached. The IG concluded that this number was overstated and did not necessarily represent veterans actively seeking VA enrollment.

The report found “multiple reasons” for data unreliability. One was that many applications in pending status had no dates indicating when they were filed. Also, most had been inactive for years. That’s because the HEC had never been directed to establish limits on how long enrollment system records could remain in pending status.

The final IG report found that 307,000, or 35 percent, of applications in pending status were veterans reported as deceased by the Social Security Administration. That’s much higher than the 238,000 veterans who “have already died” reported by Huffington. But the IG couldn’t even say how many actually sought VA care.

Due “to data limitations, we could not determine

specifically how many pending (enrollment system) records represent veterans who applied for health-care benefits,” the IG explained.

Why? Because the HEC system “did not effectively define, collect and manage enrollment data. In addition, VHA lacked adequate procedures to identify date-of-death information or implement necessary updates to the individual’s status.”

The IG audit ordered last year by Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, also substantiated a whistleblower allegation that VHA officials had incorrectly marked some unprocessed applications as complete, and “possibly deleted” over the past five years 10,000 or more transactions using its Workload Reporting and Productivity (WRAP) tool to clean up enrollment records. But the IG said it had no way of determining whether the deletions were

evidence of data manipulation or made for legitimate purposes such as duplicative transactions.

VA officials said they first acknowledged major problems with enrollment management and data integrity last year, and realize that issues surrounding the enrollment process are “confusing to veterans and our stakeholders.” As of June 30, VA had contacted 302,045 veterans by mail asking them to submit required documents to establish eligibility.

Regarding news reports of hundreds of thousands of veterans having died awaiting VA care, officials said, they used “incorrectly conflated data related to ‘pending records’ in our enrollment system with data about fully enrolled veterans (who) have chosen to use, and who are receiving, VA health care. They are separate issues and separate data.”

VA officials said they repeatedly point this out to media, and yet “stories ... continue to appear with this incorrect information.”

VA mismanagement has created numerous challenges. One of those now includes filtering facts from hype so that veterans and advocates focus their time and resources on real issues.

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for more than 30 years.



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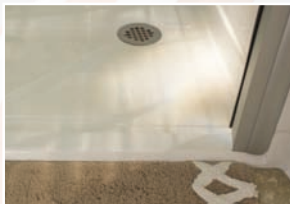
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Commitment Issues

The War-Light approach to fighting terrorism continues to keep victory beyond America's grasp.

BY ETHAN ROCKE

When Afghanistan became the first U.S. target in the war on terror in the fall of 2001, there wasn't much of a war plan. With winter approaching and Afghanistan's well-known history as "the graveyard of empires," President George W. Bush was averse to committing large numbers of ground troops. He opted instead for a strategy that minimized the number of U.S. troops deployed, relying primarily on the CIA and small teams of U.S. Special Forces who advised and funded anti-Taliban militias such as the Northern Alliance.

"The view prevailing among senior American military leaders was that overwhelming air power, suitcases full of cash and surrogate militias could win the war," wrote Mary Anne Weaver in *The New York Times Magazine* in 2005.

In the first phase of the war in Afghanistan, winning meant capturing or killing Osama bin Laden and destroying al-Qaida and its surrogates. With the added capability of precision airstrikes directed by the Special Forces, the militias drove the Taliban from their Kandahar stronghold by December 2001. Bin Laden and his followers were on the run and holed up in the mountain stronghold of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan.

Originally built for the mujahideen's war against the Soviets with support from the CIA in the 1980s, Tora Bora was a complex network of fortified caves amid unforgiving terrain more than 13,000 feet up. Weaver described it as "miles of tunnels, bunkers and base camps, dug deeply into the steep rock walls." To meet the force of at least 1,500 well-trained and equipped fighters at Tora Bora, the Pentagon dispatched nothing more than a few dozen Special Forces troops aligned with several militias from competing warlords.

By Dec. 5, 2001, then-Brig. Gen. Jim Mattis commanded 4,000 Marines in the Afghan theater. He argued strongly that his Marines should surround and seal off bin Laden's lair, but U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) turned down his requests. "The Bush administration later concluded," Weaver wrote, "that the refusal of CENTCOM to dispatch the Marines – along with their failure to commit U.S. ground forces to Afghanistan generally – was the gravest error of the war."

If Gen. Tommy Franks had let "Mad Dog" Mattis and his Marines off their leash in early December 2001, bin Laden likely would have been killed or captured and al-Qaida routed within months of the

9/11 attacks. Instead, about 800 al-Qaida fighters escaped Tora Bora, and bin Laden left around Dec. 16, making his way over the border to Pakistan, where he stayed until he was killed by members of SEAL Team Six almost a decade later.

For those who revere Mattis with cult-like fealty, an obvious takeaway from Tora Bora is that if "Mad Dog" says do it, you do it. While I count myself among the Marines who would endorse that maxim, he is not the linchpin of U.S. foreign policy. If Tora Bora should have taught us anything, it is that our strategic objectives must always be married to the force levels necessary to achieve them. This is one of the main pillars of the Powell Doctrine. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in the George H.W. Bush administration, Gen. Colin Powell expanded on principles first articulated in 1984 by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, prescribing several criteria the United States should meet before committing the nation to war. Among them was the need for a clear, attainable objective with a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement.

Pointing to a series of successful military operations under his tenure as JCS chairman, Powell wrote in 1992, "The reason for our success is that in every instance we have carefully matched the use of military force to our political objectives. We owe it to the men and women who go in harm's way to make sure that this is always the case and that their lives are not squandered for unclear purposes." Powell conceived his doctrine based on lessons learned from Vietnam and his experiences spanning 30 years in uniform.

When Donald Rumsfeld, Powell's ideological rival, took control of the Pentagon as George W. Bush's first defense secretary, most of the lessons learned in Korea and Vietnam were effectively thrown out the window. Rumsfeld's vision called for something like a "War-Light" doctrine. This is my name for those conflicts characterized by poorly conceived strategic objectives sold to the American public based on gross underestimations of the number of conventional forces and the length of commitment required to achieve them. War-Light is antithetical to the conventional assumptions upon which the Powell Doctrine was based. Its tragic legacy is a generation of Americans for whom a clear victory in prolonged conflict has proven as elusive as the moral authority with which the war was waged.

WHILE MAKING his case for military action against Iraq to members of the House International Relations Committee in October 2002, Bush said, “People out there say you cannot fight in Afghanistan and win in Iraq. Defeating two enemies is very difficult, but we will do it.”

According to Bob Woodward’s “Plan of Attack,” Bush instructed Rumsfeld in November 2001 to discreetly begin reviewing the Pentagon’s war plan for Iraq. In the following months, Rumsfeld met several times with Franks, commander of CENTCOM, pressuring him to revise the Pentagon’s plan and substantially reduce the number of boots on the ground. The plan Rumsfeld inherited – basically, the plan with which the United States had defeated Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War – called for at least 400,000 troops. When he concluded his back-to-the-drawing-board dance with Franks, Rumsfeld had settled on an invasion force of around 150,000.

Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Greg Newbold, who served as JCS director of operations in 2002, resigned in protest of Rumsfeld’s plans for the invasion. In an April 2006 essay for *Time*, Newbold wrote that U.S. forces were sent to Iraq “with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions – or bury the results.”

When then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003, he offered this assessment for an Iraq invasion: “Something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers are

probably, you know, a figure that would be required. We’re talking about post-hostilities control over a piece of geography that’s fairly significant with the kinds of ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems.” Two days later, Rumsfeld and then-Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz dismissed Shinseki’s assessment in the media. Rumsfeld said Shinseki’s numbers were “far from the mark,” and Wolfowitz used the words “wildly off the mark.”

In his memoir, former JCS chairman Gen. Hugh Shelton said this of Rumsfeld’s tenure at the Pentagon: “It was the worst style of leadership I witnessed in 38 years of service or have witnessed at the highest levels of the corporate world since then.” Rumsfeld has been publicly rebuked by several other generals who worked for him in Iraq and at the Pentagon, including retired Maj. Gen. John Batiste, retired Maj. Gen. John Riggs, retired Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack Jr., retired Lt. Gen. Paul Van Riper and retired Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton.

Eaton, who in June 2003 was given the task of building a new Iraqi army, is one of several high-ranking officials in Iraq who were flabbergasted when L. Paul Bremer, as the newly appointed head of the Coalition Provincial Authority (CPA), implemented CPA Orders 1 and 2. With the stroke of his pen, he implemented a policy of de-Ba’athification, dictating that all public employees affiliated with Hussein’s Ba’ath Party be fired and prohibited from future employment in the public sector. The move effectively barred huge numbers of Iraq’s educated class from working to build a



April 2013

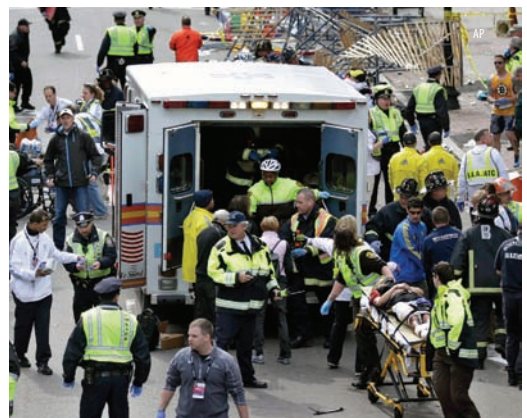
The new enemy

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (aka ISIL, ISIS) is formed out of al-Qaida in Iraq, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In March, ISIS takes control of Raqqa, Syria – its first conquest in a siege that will eventually take Fallujah and sections of Ramadi previously controlled by U.S. and Iraqi forces. ISIS mounts a worldwide recruitment campaign and draws into its movement an estimated 80 percent of anti-Western Islamic militants. ISIS breaks from al-Qaida.

April 15, 2013

Chechen brothers Dzhokar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev

having learned how to build bombs by reading an online al-Qaida magazine, attack the Boston Marathon near the finish line, killing three and injuring no fewer than 264. Evidence obtained after a manhunt in Watertown, Mass., leads to police shooting the elder brother to death. The younger brother, now 22, is later sentenced to death by lethal injection.



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new government and relegated them to the ranks of the unemployed.

Then Bremer dissolved the Iraqi army, a decision that went against the advice of virtually every military officer and diplomat assigned to the Organization of Recovery and Humanitarian Assistance, which served as Iraq's transitional government until the CPA took over. And after sending tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers into the ranks of the unemployed, Bremer, who answered to Rumsfeld, made no effort to secure the vast supply of military arms and equipment that lay in depots all over the country. The Oscar-nominated 2007 documentary "No End in Sight" is a maddeningly detailed account of the general incoherence of the Pentagon's decisions in those vital early months.

"(Bremer's) exclusion of the Iraqis early on from major participation in the decision-making process was a grievous error," Lawrence Wilkerson says in the film. A retired Army colonel, Wilkerson was Powell's chief of staff during his tenure as secretary of state. He endorsed Powell's philosophy of "you break it, you own it," meaning simply that "when you take out a regime and you bring down a government, you become the government."

In a 2007 interview in *The Atlantic*, Powell discussed the Pentagon's failure to own Iraq. "In the second phase of this conflict, which was beginning after the statue fell, we made serious mistakes in not acting like a government," he said. "One, maintaining order. Two, keeping people from destroying their own property. Three, not having in

place security forces – either ours or theirs or a combination of the two to keep order. And in the absence of order, chaos ensues."

U.S. TROOP LEVELS in Iraq peaked at 166,300 during Bush's now-famous surge of forces in 2007. Army Gen. David Petraeus devised and oversaw the implementation of the strategy, which relied on troop increases coupled with a policy of paying millions each month to the "Sons of Iraq" – many of whom were Sunni insurgents who had been killing Americans – to turn against al-Qaida and support the United States and its efforts. The Anbar (Sunni) Awakening succeeded in bringing greater stability to Iraq, but the gains ultimately proved temporary as a war-weary United States elected Barack Obama, who ran on a promise to draw down forces in Iraq and shift attention back to Afghanistan. When Obama announced his own surge of forces in Afghanistan in 2009, he also opted for War-Light, deploying 30,000 troops there despite the fact that his generals had asked for far more. In 2011, Obama delivered on his promise and withdrew all U.S. forces from Iraq.

As the 2016 presidential election approaches, Middle Eastern policy and the military are political wedge issues once again. For most of the Republican candidates, the genesis of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) can be easily pinpointed at the moment U.S. troops left Iraq, or when Obama failed to arm and train certain factions of Syrian rebels. For liberals, the rise of ISIS can be clearly traced to Bush's invasion of Iraq

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Josue Robles, retired Army major general and former USAA CEO, explaining why The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services has a veteran-hiring program that is a model for other national employers



51.7 percent of post-9/11-generation veterans

surveyed in 2014 in Los Angeles County said they did not know where to get help or who to see for care or support.

"The State of the American Veteran: The Los Angeles County Veterans Study," USC School of Social Work

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We are a nation that has forgotten how to win, and if we do not change our calculus when it comes to waging war, we will not disrupt the pattern.

in 2003. This pattern of partisan finger-pointing saddles U.S. political discourse with oversimplifications of the Middle East's infinitely complex cultural and political landscape.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq and other military operations in the Middle East are at least partly responsible for the massive destabilization that has occurred there in the past 14 years. Deposing Hussein led to the political ascendance of Iraq's Shia majority, which upended a long-standing policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's resistance to the political power-sharing Bush's surge was supposed to facilitate opened the door for ISIS to exploit the disenfranchised Sunnis. The centuries-old rift between Sunnis and Shias throughout the Middle East, and the consequences of the Arab Spring uprisings, should not be discounted.

In an interview with *Politico* magazine in July, John McLaughlin, former deputy director of the CIA, said, "Remember that in 2011, we had the Arab Awakening, and remember that Syria went drastically bad, largely because of (Syrian President Bashar) Assad's reaction to what were legitimate protests in the area. Syria is about 70 percent Sunni, and that is the real engine that is drawing in fighters ... at something like 1,000 a month."

Would leaving 10,000 or 20,000 U.S. troops have prevented the rise of ISIS? It's possible, but the answer is inconsequential to the foreign policy problems the United States faces going forward. According to a Harvard University study published in 2013, "The Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, taken together, will be the most expensive wars in U.S. history – totaling somewhere between \$4 trillion to \$6 trillion. This includes long-term medical care and disability compensation for servicemembers, veterans and families, military replenishment, and social and economic costs. The largest portion of that bill is yet to be paid."

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee Jan. 27, Mattis said, "The foundation of military strength is our economic strength ... If we refuse to reduce our debt/pay down our deficit, what is the impact on national security for future generations who will inherit this irresponsible debt and the taxes to service it? No nation in history has maintained its military power if it failed to keep its fiscal house in order."

In 2004, bin Laden put out a video recording in which he lauded al-Qaida's "bleed-until-bankruptcy plan" and gleefully pointed to America's ballooning deficits as evidence that the terrorists were on a path to victory.



"As the report says, sequester-level budgets would result in continued force-level cuts across the military services. The Army would be reduced to 420,000 active-duty soldiers along with 315,000 in the Guard and 185,000 in the reserve. The Marine Corps would drop to 175,000 active-duty personnel. The Air Force would have to eliminate its entire fleet of KC-10 tankers and shrink its inventory of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The Navy would be forced to mothball six destroyers and retire an aircraft carrier and its associated air wing, reducing the carrier fleet to 10."

Department of Defense news release, April 15, 2014

Aug. 7, 2014

U.S. response

President Obama authorizes air strikes and relief drops in Iraq to repel ISIS and support the Iraqi army. ISIS continues to move and grow, committing atrocities among civilians, destroying or selling artifacts, and seizing towns, airfields and oil refineries. The terror group broadcasts its activities widely through social media.



June 29, 2014

The Islamic State

After capturing Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, ISIS renames itself the Islamic State and claims religious, political and military authority over Muslims around the world.

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As America honors the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, The American Historical Foundation is proud to salute those who served in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War, by appropriately issuing this firing museum-quality Limited Edition on the classic Colt .45 military pistol. Each Vietnam Tribute .45 is a working Colt® Government Model® pistol and fires .45 ACP ammo.

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War-Light has long been an intoxicating theory that U.S. leaders have embraced for its populist appeal, but the historical record exposes it as an elaborate lie we like to tell ourselves: that war can be cheap and easy and our power to shape the world with military might is limitless.

Writing for *The Atlantic* in July 2013, Dartmouth College President Emeritus James Wright offered a sober accounting of the U.S. military scorecard since 1950: “Korea established a pattern that has been unfortunately followed in American wars in Vietnam, Iraq (II) and Afghanistan. These are wars without declaration and without the political consensus and the resolve to meet specific and changing goals. They are improvisational wars. They are dangerous.”

In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* in March, Mattis endorsed Wright’s essay, saying, “If you don’t get the political end-state right up front, you’re going to be engaged in a war you don’t know how to end in favorable terms.”

Sir Winston Churchill famously said, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” We have been repeating our mistakes since 1950, and the cultural hubris that fuels the pattern is resurgent yet again. A cycle of national amnesia and partisan gamesmanship binds our collective imagination, and as the hard-fought gains we made in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to dwindle, the psychological toll exacted on America’s collective conscience grows. We are a nation that has forgotten how to win, and if we do not change our

calculus when it comes to waging war, we will not disrupt the pattern.

In an April 17 commentary for *The Wall Street Journal*, Mattis eloquently expressed the pride and reverence I have for the men and women who serve in uniform today: “No granite monuments, regardless of how grandly built, can take the place of your raw example of courage, when in your youth you answered your country’s call. When you looked past the hot political rhetoric. When you voluntarily left behind life’s well-lit avenues. When you signed that blank check to the American people, payable with your lives. And, most important, when you made a full personal commitment even while, for over a dozen years, the country’s political leadership had difficulty defining our national level of commitment.”

Those politicians seeking to command the most powerful military the world has ever seen owe the nation and its military members and veterans a clear-eyed assessment of the legacy and lessons of the war on terror. The United States cannot afford to buy another war based on false promises of swift victory with minimal commitments. 🌿

Ethan Rocke is an award-winning writer, photographer and filmmaker in Portland, Ore. He served as an infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division from 1998 to 2001 and as a Marine Corps combat correspondent from 2001 to 2011.

 www.ethanrocke.com



Oct. 26, 2014

End of war in Afghanistan

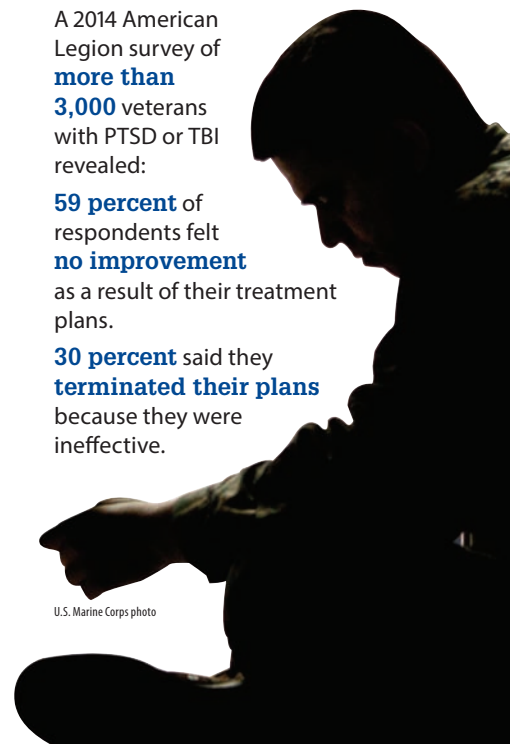
The United States officially ends combat operations in Afghanistan, handing over its last base, Camp Leatherneck, while Great Britain simultaneously hands over Camp Bastion. On Dec. 28, NATO officially ceases combat operations, marked by a ceremony in Kabul. U.S. forces continue operations under the name Operation Freedom’s Sentinel, joined by a new NATO mission named Operation Resolute Support that will involve 28 NATO nations, 14 partner nations and 11,000 U.S. troops.

A 2014 American Legion survey of **more than 3,000** veterans with PTSD or TBI revealed:

59 percent of respondents felt **no improvement** as a result of their treatment plans.

30 percent said they **terminated their plans** because they were ineffective.

U.S. Marine Corps photo



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Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper," based on the memoir of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, dominated the box office in 2014. With a take of \$547 million, it is the highest-grossing war film of all time (unadjusted for inflation). Photo courtesy James Dever

The Global War on Film

Hollywood weighs in on the post-9/11 military experience, getting it right more often than not.

BY MICHAEL HJELMSTAD

Three questions determine the quality of a war film:

- Is it a good story?
- Is it well told?
- Is it an accurate military portrayal?

A good story begins with a concept so compelling that just the idea conjures up an interesting adventure. A story well told typically has a compelling hero's journey with a specific

beginning, middle and end, all in the right places. An accurate portrayal simply means that the military depiction is believable; it doesn't need to be a recruiting commercial or documentary, but it can't be outright fantasy either.

Using information from the Internet Movie Database and Box Office Mojo, here are the best-known post-9/11 war films, and how they stand up against the three questions of quality.

“ZERO DARK THIRTY” (2012)

A chronicle of the decade-long hunt for al-Qaida terrorist leader Osama bin Laden after the 9/11 attacks, and his death at the hands of Navy SEAL Team Six in May 2011.

Director: Kathryn Bigelow

Production budget: \$40 million

Worldwide gross: \$132,820,716

Kathryn Bigelow and writer Mark Boal, a former war journalist, teamed up for an award-winning film full of political commentary disguised in a nonfiction style. This film showed the complexity of the intelligence community and seemed to equally annoy people on both sides of the political spectrum. The recreation of the historic night-vision raid on the Abbottabad compound where bin Laden was killed is a testament to why the film was nominated for five Academy Awards and won for Best Sound Editing.

- ☒ Good story
- ☒ Well told
- ☒ Accurate military portrayal

“THE HURT LOCKER” (2009)

During the Iraq war, a sergeant recently assigned to an Army bomb squad ends up at odds with his squadmates due to his maverick way of handling his work.

Director: Kathryn Bigelow

Production budget: \$15 million

Worldwide gross: \$49,230,772

This movie did a good job of showing the difficulties some servicemembers face when trying to balance personal lives with intense combat. But accuracy went completely out the window with absurd tactics, complete lack of military discipline and a storyline about a jackass going rogue. Despite the story problems, this film was one of the first successful films about the global war on terrorism.

- ☒ Good story
- ☒ Well told
- ☐ Accurate military portrayal

“STOP-LOSS” (2008)

A decorated soldier returns from his tour of duty in Iraq only to find his life turned upside down when he is arbitrarily ordered to return to field duty by the Army.

Director: Kimberly Peirce

Production budget: \$25 million

Worldwide gross: \$11,207,130

Less of a commercial success than “The Hurt Locker,” but far better storytelling. This film does an amazing job of showing the range of military personalities in a story about a soldier who thinks he’s done his part but isn’t released from duty after his enlistment is up. The film convincingly illustrates the struggle to do the right thing when lines are blurred. Peirce did an incredible amount of research to learn the real stories of U.S. servicemembers, and she told them well.

- ☒ Good story
- ☒ Well told
- ☒ Accurate military portrayal

The following three films highlight the entertainment industry’s hero worship and deep love for Navy SEALs. Although the films qualify as accurate military portrayals, there is some debate about the sainthood of every SEAL depicted on film.



“ACT OF VALOR” (2012)

An elite team of Navy SEALs embark on a covert mission to recover a kidnapped CIA agent.

Directors: Mike McCoy and Scott Waugh

Production budget: \$12 million

Worldwide gross: \$81,272,766

The use of actual Navy SEALs make the action sequences as accurate as possible. These SEALs are among the best at what they do – and that’s a good thing, because they are not accomplished actors, and that shows, too.

- ☒ Good story
- ☐ Well told
- ☒ Accurate military portrayal

“LONE SURVIVOR” (2013)

Marcus Luttrell and his team set out on a mission to capture or kill notorious Taliban leader Ahmad Shah in late June 2005. Luttrell and his team are left to fight for their lives in one of the most valiant efforts of modern warfare.

Director: Peter Berg

Production budget: \$40 million

Worldwide gross: \$149,295,601

The action borders on gratuitous in this story of an epic battle where many great men fall. Mark Wahlberg plays lone survivor Luttrell, author of the best-selling book. The cinematography puts the viewer right in the action, and the storytelling connects personally.

- ✓ Good story
- ✓ Well told
- ✓ Accurate military portrayal

“AMERICAN SNIPER” (2014)

Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle’s pinpoint accuracy saves countless lives on the battlefield and turns him into a legend. Back home to his wife and kids after four tours of duty, however, he finds that it is the war he can’t leave behind.

Director: Clint Eastwood

Production budget: \$58.8 million

Worldwide gross: \$547,326,372

Bradley Cooper delivers a chilling performance of the man an elite fighting group nicknamed “the Legend.” Kyle is so good it’s unbelievable, and

that’s the accurate story. The edge-of-your-seat tension starts in the opening scene and doesn’t stop. This film is already a military classic.

- ✓ Good story
- ✓ Well told
- ✓ Accurate military portrayal

“TAKING CHANCE” (2009)

“Taking Chance” is an independent film that was selected for showing at the Sundance Film Festival and then picked up by HBO. Based on real-life events, it tells the story of Lt. Col. Michael Strobl, a volunteer military escort officer who accompanies the body of 19-year-old Marine Chance Phelps back to his hometown of Dubois, Wyo. The American Legion presented Strobl with its Patriot Award in 2009.

Director: Ross Katz

Production budget: Unknown

Worldwide gross: HBO distribution

The military worked closely with this very accurate production. The detail is impressive, but the film needed a breath of fresh air. It’s a sad story that remains heavy for all of its 120 minutes.

- ✓ Good story
- ✓ Well told
- ✓ Accurate military portrayal

Michael Hjelmstad is a Marine Corps veteran, writer, film producer and member of American Legion Hollywood Post 43 in California.

Social media’s rise in the post-9/11 era

Facebook launched in 2004. By 2015, more than **1.8 billion people** were considered “active users.” YouTube debuted in 2005. By 2014, the site registered **800 million unique visitors a month**. Twitter came on the scene in 2006. **By 2015**, it had more than **1 billion** users. In 2007, Apple introduced the iPhone. By 2014, worldwide sales of touch-screen smartphones **exceeded 1.2 billion**. The effects, from a wartime perspective, have included the need for policy to control distribution of classified material by servicemembers and their families; promotion and communication by protesters during the Arab Spring and other uprisings; the use of YouTube to disseminate terrorist propaganda and hostage videos; and international recruitment of ISIS fighters.



The greatest service needs

identified by post-9/11 veterans surveyed in Los Angeles County in 2014 were, in order, employment assistance, educational assistance, health-care assistance and mental health assistance.

“The State of the American Veteran: The Los Angeles County Veterans Study,” USC School of Social Work

U.S. Army troop strength

2008: 570,000

2015: 490,000

2017: 450,000*

* Projected

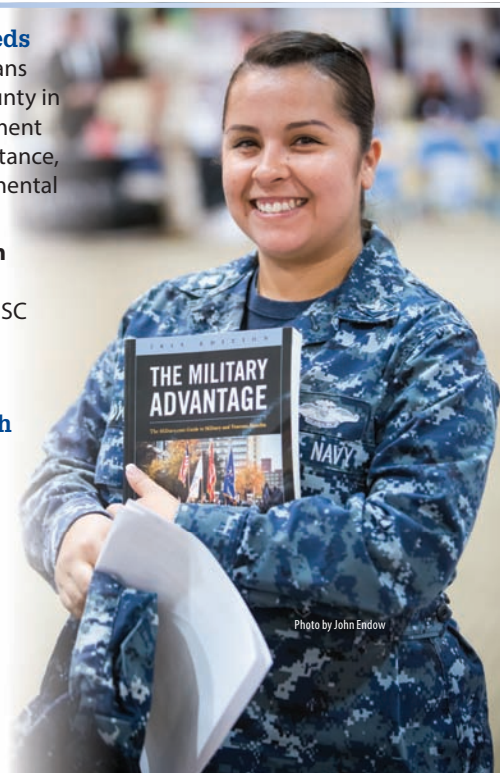


Photo by John Endow

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01-16930-001-E94901

SMALL VICTORIES



*For an Army family coping with loss,
a Legion-sponsored fishing trip offers healing.*

BY MARK SEAVEY

*Royce Dula, 9, enjoys a day on the water during
"Fishing for Freedom," an annual event hosted
by The American Legion Department of Georgia's
5th District.* Photo by Brett Flashnick

Although Ray Dula is not a big fan of fishing (“easier to just get fish at the Publix”), she was eager to take her kids angling in May to remember her husband as he had been years earlier.

Reclining in the back of a boat, enjoying the sunshine, Dula says she just wanted to show her children a bit more about who their father was and what he enjoyed. “He’s not with us (anymore), but I kind of wanted them to see what his legacy is, what it would have been if he was still with us,” she says. “He loved to fish.”

She turns to the four kids, jokingly warning them, “You catch some fish or you’re all grounded!”

Returning to the subject of her late husband, Ebbin, she continues describing him. “He just loved the outdoors – the wilderness, fishing, camping – and that’s not something I particularly care for. But I feel like it’s my obligation as the mother of his children, and the only parent left for my kids, to bring as much of the things that he liked into our everyday life.”

This particular outing was part of “Fishing For Freedom,” an annual event coordinated by The American Legion Department of Georgia’s 5th District. Across the country, departments, districts and posts sponsor activities such as this one to connect and support the generation that served in the post-9/11 era. Dula was one of more than 300 veterans attending this year’s event just outside Carrollton, Ga.

“We support disabled veterans, Gold Star Mothers and families, and any injured veteran, and we give them an opportunity to fish and relax with their family,” says Eddie Asberry, the 5th District’s commander. “We get veterans from all over the state and surrounding states. We furnish them rods and reels and tackle boxes, and we feed them breakfast and lunch, and then they are off to fishing.”

Dula’s four children – Royce, 9, twins Eyan and Emmarie, 5, and Erianna, 4 – entertain themselves playing with a bucket of fish. Unfortunately, it’s the bucket with the bait fish, as they show little patience in letting bigger fish get to the hook before trying to reel them in. Erianna especially enjoys pouring a small container of worms directly into the bucket of minnows. “Maybe they can be friends,” she says.

Meanwhile, Dula is thinking about how the military prepared her for parenthood. “When you have soldiers, your job is to in some ways parent them and mold them into future NCOs and officers,” she says. “With my kids, I’m just molding them into future ladies and gentlemen.”

Her own father was a Marine Corps drill sergeant and NBC (Nuclear, Biological and Chemical) specialist

officer, while her mother worked in Marine Corps administration. Her brother is an intelligence specialist in the Coast Guard. Further back, both her grandfathers served in the Army. Two uncles were in the Marine Corps – one an explosive ordnance demolitions man, the other a legal clerk supervisor. Another uncle served in the Army. An aunt served as a legal clerk in the Marine Corps.

“I was used to that way of life already,” Dula says. “That’s why when it was time to either go to college or join the Army, the military seemed the most natural thing for me to do. It’s all I’ve ever known.

“Although I came from a family with deep military investment, I was very immature when I joined and didn’t really grasp its significance until after I was discharged,” she continues. “I was an ‘if the rule wasn’t going to break, I’m gonna bend it’ kind of child. Not mature enough to go to college and appreciate my parents’ sacrifice and not blow their money, I needed an atmosphere that would not only allow me the space to grow up but provide consequences for my actions, whether they be good or bad.”

So Dula enlisted in the Army as a military police officer, in the footsteps of her paternal grandfather. After basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and a stint in Korea, she was assigned duty at Fort McPherson in Georgia, where she met fellow MP Ebbin Dula.

“We met while stationed at Fort McPherson, and wouldn’t you know, we didn’t like each other at all,” Dula recalls. “But I really admired his work ethic and his many accomplishments in just a short period in the Army. I wanted to get promoted to sergeant and really turn my career around, and so I went to him for help. Not only did I make E-5, but I had fallen in love. He pinned me when I got promoted to sergeant.”

The Dulas were honorably discharged from the military in 2005, and their first child, Royce, was born Aug. 7 that year. They married a few weeks later. “Just me, Ebbin and our new baby,” she says. “Four years later we were pregnant with Eyan and Emmarie, who were born four months prematurely and spent most of their early lives in and out of the hospital, and then just 13 months later Erianna ‘Bear’ was born.”

Ebbin got hired as a federal police officer, and re-enrolled at Saint Leo University in Florida to pursue a criminal justice degree. To his wife, everything seemed to be going well, but Ebbin was plagued by inner demons. Unfortunately, the couple separated, and after April 28, 2013, there would be no reconciliation.

“The night I lost my husband will forever be etched in my mind,” Dula says. “I was on the phone with him when he shot himself. He threatened to shoot himself

an hour or so before he actually did it. I notified the police. Being a federal police officer, he knew exactly what to say to them. They left. While on the phone with me for the second time, he was constantly moving. Then it just happened. I knew what it was when it

happened but I didn't want to believe it. I got confirmation two hours later. The aftermath was brutal, a pain that I never knew existed. My heart literally broke, and I felt it in every way imaginable."

Dula had lost her husband and best friend. Now alone, with the exception of family who lived hundreds of miles away in Virginia, she focused on taking care of their four children and maintaining what she could of her family's life.

"Initially I was hanging on for dear life," she says. "It was a struggle for me to do the simplest of things. People would tell me to take it one day at a time, and I would say, 'No, I'm taking it one second at a time, because that's all I can handle.'"

"As time passed, I found I was stronger than I was the day before. I was able to handle more, and the feeling of accomplishment made me grateful for my life, my kids and having the power to turn something negative into something positive."

Dula says that her survival depended on the small



Army veteran Ray Dula and her daughter Erianna, 4, prepare to board the boat at Georgia Power's Plant Wansley. Photo by Brett Flashnick

victories. "Whatever step you make toward healing, whether it be small or big, is enough," she says. "There's nothing to prove. It's an uphill battle, and you choose your pace and the distance to climb or even crawl. People who want to offer their advice or opinion, but they've never been in a situation remotely close to yours.

Those are the people you steer clear of."

Dula has not just survived, but thrived. She has the support of her family, and a good job as a customer service representative for an insurance company. She says she refuses to let the loss of her husband define her. Instead, she wants her recovery and the bright future of her children do that for her.

"Yes, it hurts talking about my husband's death, but if my hurting can heal others ... mission accomplished," she says.

As for Fishing for Freedom, the Georgia Legion's 5th District is proud to organize it. "We want to show our appreciation for those who have suffered in some way," says Rick Cowan, program director. While Dula and her children have indeed suffered, they are grateful to have had the opportunity to spend a day together, and with other veterans.

Mark Seavey is new media manager for The American Legion.



"A recent review found more than 1,300 federal and state policies, executive orders and agency directives that impact veterans or their families. Navigating this landscape of government services can be confusing and frustrating."

From "My America: Navigating the Post-9/11 Veteran Landscape," Bush Institute, Nov. 11, 2014

Among more than 2 million U.S. nonprofit organizations, **no fewer than 45,000** claim to serve U.S. military personnel and their families. Of that 45,000, **80 percent** operate on annual revenues of less than **\$100,000**.

George W. Bush Institute



Photo by Travis Heying

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A FORCE for GOOD

National Commander Mike Helm celebrates Legion's legacy, shatters fundraising goal.

Photo by Clay Lomneth

The United States needs and depends on a strong American Legion, National Commander Mike Helm said in his address to the national convention on Sept. 1 in Baltimore.

Generous donations and membership growth will allow the Legion to continue to assist veterans with benefits, provide help to transitioning servicemembers, sponsor job fairs, offer youth programs and fund charity programs, he added.

When Helm was elected in 2014, he set a goal of raising \$4 million for Legion and Auxiliary charities. Before the convention convened, the total raised was approximately \$5.9 million. In addition, donations from the Legacy Run were just shy of \$1,250,000.

"I thought I might be the \$6 million man, but now I may be the \$7 million man," Helm said with a grin. "I never dreamed that would happen."

Even as he celebrated surpassing his campaign's goal, Helm said that the Legion Family must pour even more effort into increasing membership.

"We are four years away from our centennial," he said. "The American Legion has been a force for good in this country for almost 100 years. If we don't attract new members and retain current ones, who is going to provide the voice for veterans that Americans have relied on for most of this century?"

Helm also addressed a series of other high-profile issues, from veterans benefits and VA health care to national defense and security.

Galloway opens convention with comeback story

Double amputee, reality show star, motivational speaker and Legionnaire Noah Galloway opened the 97th National Convention in Baltimore with an inspiring story about his long recovery from a roadside bomb attack in Iraq 10 years ago.

“War is a difficult and challenging thing to endure,” said Galloway, who served in the Army’s 101st Airborne Division until he was wounded Dec. 19, 2005. “For me, I was injured in my second deployment and woke up in a hospital and knew my military career was over when two of my limbs were gone. I fell into a deep, dark depression.”

Over time, Galloway realized that it was up to him to teach his three children how to overcome



Photo by Lucas Carter

difficult circumstances. He changed his diet and began working out. Since then, he has finished road races, obstacle courses and marathons, and even climbed a couple of mountains. His comeback has earned him accolades and, more importantly, opportunities to spread a message of hope.

After speaking, Galloway joined National Commander Mike Helm in recognizing this year’s Legion’s youth champions.



One thing I have learned since my confirmation as secretary is (that) there is no substitute for VA. Veterans need VA. American medicine needs VA. Americans everywhere benefit from VA.

VA Secretary Robert McDonald, addressing the national convention on rumors of privatization of the system

Our troops need the best training, the newest equipment and the right compensation. For too long, we’ve been forced to make painful tradeoffs, often on short notice, critically undermining our mission.

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, speaking to the national convention



It was a scandal the first time. It was a pretty shameful episode ... in terms of the functioning of government.

Rep. Chris Van Hollen Jr., D-Md., on the 2013 federal government shutdown and the chances of it happening again

I am particularly proud of this honor. I recognize there are so many of you and people across this country – veterans who have given so much – who deserve it far more than I do.

Former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, recipient of the Legion’s Distinguished Service Medal



Millennials are considered the most financially ill-prepared generation in our nation’s history. They are missing some of those basic skills ... we can reverse this trend. I really think we have a problem and an opportunity.

Jamie Warder, president of USAA Federal Savings Bank, on how USAA’s tools and the Legion’s mentorship can help young veterans get more financially fit



“It’s our responsibility to provide quality health care to our servicemembers and their families. No exceptions. You met your responsibility, so now it’s time for us to meet our responsibility to you.”

U.S. Rep. Donna Edwards, D-Md., addressing the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission



“If we were to pull those resources – the people, the hours, the (donations) out of VA – it changes the look of VA health care ... It is amazing and to be saluted.”

VA Voluntary Services Director Sabrina Clark, on the difference made by Legion Family volunteers at VA facilities

“We are all really grateful. It was fantastic. It was a great opportunity to learn about VA benefits from the people who were there. It’s a very unique opportunity.”

1st Lt. Ken Weathers, one of four wounded Army soldiers recovering from injuries at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center who were escorted around Baltimore during the convention courtesy of the Legion’s Operation Comfort Warriors

“I knew it would be a great turnout. Veterans are very loyal.”

Linda Kane, donor recruitment representative for the American Red Cross in Baltimore, on the convention’s blood drive



Photo by Lucas Carter

Commission covers all the bases in helping veterans find employment

At every national convention, the Veterans Employment & Education (VE&E) Commission hosts events designed to help servicemembers, veterans and their spouses find and keep post-military employment.

In Baltimore, the commission hit on all cylinders, hearing from both private and federal employers in panels, conducting a veterans employment workshop, hosting a Department of Labor federal résumé-writing workshop, running a Boots to Business entrepreneurship course and hosting a Hiring Our Heroes career fair. One of its main messages: job-seeking veterans must hit on all cylinders themselves, by participating in job fairs and workshops, engaging in face-to-face interaction with employment representatives, and augmenting online searches and résumé uploads.

“It is up to us – the veterans and stakeholders in their communities – to make them feel welcome at home and guide them to the resources they need,” said Denise Rohan, chairman of the VE&E Commission.



Photo by Lucas Carter

Cadets’ ‘precision and pride’ impresses Legionnaires during Naval Academy visit

On Aug. 29, members of the Legion’s National Security Commission toured the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., near Baltimore. Every year, prior to the national convention, the commission makes a trip related to its work. It has become a tradition and highlight for commission members and their families, said National Security Division Director Joe Grassi.

“Because (the academy at Annapolis) showcases the future of America’s Navy, Legionnaires requested the opportunity to visit,” he added.

One of the country’s premier institutions of higher learning, the academy is home to more than 4,000 midshipmen who will become commissioned officers in the Navy and Marine Corps.

With the Legion following resolutions on naval power and sea defense, commission members wanted a firsthand look at how military strategy and training are evolving, Grassi said.

“You could tell that they are going to make great leaders,” he said of the cadets. “They made us proud. We were in awe of their precision and pride.”

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‘Good Guy’ Joe Torre talks Yankee legacy, work with children

Joe Torre was in what he calls “the back nine” on the golf course of life. After an outstanding career playing Major League Baseball – which included a National League Most Valuable Player Award and playing or managing more than 4,200 games with three different franchises – he had never been to a World Series.

Then George Steinbrenner, the demanding and colorful owner of the New York Yankees, called with an opportunity. Suddenly, at 56, Torre finally made it to the World Series in 1996. It led to the first of four world championships to which he’d guide the team over the next five seasons.

Originally dubbed “clueless Joe” by a New York tabloid when he arrived in the Big Apple, Torre ended up in the Baseball Hall of Fame and was immortalized with a plaque at Yankee Stadium. The team also retired his uniform number, 6, after his tenure there, which included postseason appearances in every one of his 12 seasons with the Yankees. He went on to a successful managerial stint with the Los Angeles Dodgers and currently serves as chief baseball officer for Major League Baseball.

All this aside, it was Torre’s Safe at Home Foundation, a charity dedicated to fighting domestic violence, that led The American Legion Past Department Commanders’ Club (PDCC) to select him as this year’s James V. Day “Good Guy” Award winner.

While presenting Torre with the honor at a luncheon Aug. 31 in Baltimore, Past National Commander John P. “Jake” Comer joked, “You know, Joe, my cap says Massachusetts, and I am a lifelong Boston Red Sox fan. It’s a testimony to your class and character that you were still selected for this award. But in all seriousness, it is well deserved.” Comer also presented Torre with a \$2,000 donation to Safe at Home on behalf of the PDCC.

John Raughter, media manager for the national commander, interviewed Torre for The American Legion.

Did you play American Legion Baseball?

I did. I played so much baseball as a kid. Our team, the Brooklyn Cadets, we were in so many different leagues in an effort to play a lot of baseball.

How important is Legion ball to a player’s development?

To me, it’s important because it teaches you some of life’s lessons. Playing the game is one thing. But what you get out of it and what you put into it are so much more important. The game is the game and I know it’s been my life. But it’s what you learn from it. Basically it’s a game of life. I’m a little concerned about where we’re going today with (the attitude of) ‘Look at me, here I am.’ To go through life thinking that you are the most important guy in the room is dangerous. Getting anything done, really, you need somebody to help. And I’ve always been one to talk about teamwork, because it’s so much more satisfying when you have a number of different people pulling in the same direction to accomplish something special. I was very fortunate to inherit a very special group of guys with the Yankees.

Oak Ridge Boys receive Patriot Award

The American Legion honored legendary country singers The Oak Ridge Boys with its Patriot Award, given to recognize great deeds and exemplary acts of service. Last year, The Oak Ridge Boys teamed up with the Legion for a series of public-service announcements raising awareness and support for the needs of veterans, including better detection and treatment of PTSD, help navigating the VA benefits process, and education and career opportunities for those who have served our nation in uniform.

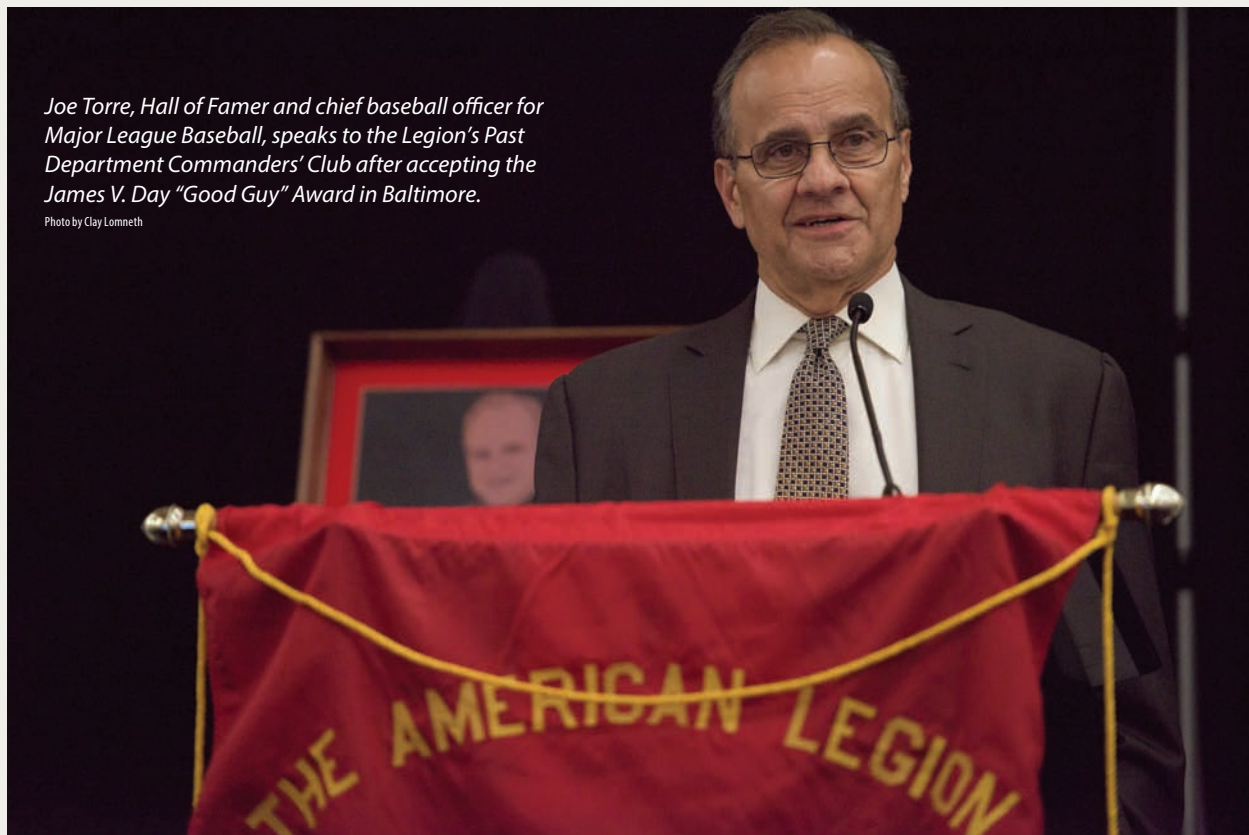


Soldier’s Wish gives Army vet hunting trip

Soldier’s Wish, a nonprofit organization that identifies and fulfills unmet needs of U.S. military personnel, veterans and their families, had a huge presence at the convention. In addition to a booth in the exhibit hall, Soldier’s Wish gave a Colorado hunting trip to retired Army Sgt. Brian McGuire, who lost both feet to an IED blast in Afghanistan.

Joe Torre, Hall of Famer and chief baseball officer for Major League Baseball, speaks to the Legion's Past Department Commanders' Club after accepting the James V. Day "Good Guy" Award in Baltimore.

Photo by Clay Lometh



You managed the 1998 Yankees, who won 114 regular season games. Would you say that was the greatest team ever?

You know, the first week of the season it didn't look that way. But it would really be tough to look at a team that was better. It's tough to compare generations. Winning 114 during the season and going 11-1 in the postseason is pretty amazing.

Tell me about your military experience.

I was in the Air National Guard. It was a very tense time; I was in basic training during the Cuban crisis in 1962. I had already been in the big leagues for two years, and we were laying in bed listening to those planes take off from Kelly Air Force Base. It was, "Wow." And, of course, needless to say, my drill instructors were saying I'd be playing in Havana next year. They always liked to stick a knife in you. It was a scary time. I think we all know that. Of course, we didn't know how scary it was until you got the news accounts after the fact. We were certainly alert to the fact that we were close to something that wasn't good.

Why did you create the Safe at Home Foundation?

I was a shy kid. Not a lot of self-esteem as a youngster. Didn't even go out for my high school baseball team as a freshman. I didn't have confidence in myself. I don't know, I thought I was born that way. Fast-forward to 1995: my wife was eight months pregnant with our daughter. I was between jobs at the time. I was in Cincinnati, I had been fired by the Cardinals, and she said, "Can you come to this self-help seminar with me?" I said, "Sure." I mean, she's eight months pregnant, I'm not going to say no. And I had no clue what to

expect. It's called Life Success (and) it still exists today ... I remember standing in front of perfect strangers, crying my eyes out, because they were talking about something that let me know what was going on in my house: my dad abusing my mom, which as a youngster growing up I knew was taking place.

I never saw him physically abuse her, but I saw the results; he was a New York City cop, so I was in the room as an 8- or 9-year-old when he went for his revolver to threaten her. All of that stuff that had an impact on me. So once I went to New York with the Yankees, my wife said, "What charity do you want to get involved with?" It usually involves children. I said, "How about domestic violence?"

It caught her off guard a little bit, because I didn't talk about it. But going forward, we started our Safe at Home Foundation and based it on education. It was my older daughter, Cristina, and my wife ... if we're going to end the cycle of domestic violence, you're going to have to educate people. We put safe rooms in schools – named after my mom, we call them Margaret's Place – with master's-level counselors. We are in eight schools in the New York area, and we have four programs in Los Angeles. We work with the Boys Club and Girls Club there also, and we've had close to 50,000 kids come through our schools. Though there is always more work to be done, we are having an impact.

– John Raughter

Go online to read more about Joe Torre and the Safe at Home Foundation: www.joetorre.org

“This is what The American Legion does”

Legion Family members teamed up with volunteers from The 6th Branch, a Baltimore-based veteran-led community service organization, to clean up a Darley Park neighborhood lot that has been vacant for more than 20 years.

On Aug. 28, for more than four hours, the groups built garden boxes, picked up trash and cut down tree limbs to prepare the way for a future community park.

This was the third volunteer project organized by the Legion Family at a national convention; the first was in Houston in 2013, followed by another in Charlotte, N.C., last year.

“This neighborhood needs help,” Past National Commander Tom Bock said. “We’ve got the bodies. We can have a good time at the convention while we’re making a difference in the community.”



Photo by Lucas Carter



Photo by Clay Lommett

Riders smash Legacy Run record

This year’s Legacy Run, which marked the 10th anniversary of the annual motorcycle ride to the Legion’s national convention city, generated \$1,249,684 – more than \$436,000 prior to and during the ride, and a whopping \$812,000 during the convention. That’s a record in money raised for the Legacy Fund, which provides college scholarships for children of U.S. troops who died on active duty on or after 9/11.

Hundreds of American Legion Riders took part in the four-day Legacy Run, which left Indianapolis on Aug. 23 and covered more than 1,000 miles through Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania before arriving in Maryland. Stops included American Legion posts, military and veterans memorials, and the Flight 93 Memorial in Somerset County, Pa.

After announcing to convention delegates the grand total raised, National Commander Mike Helm led a standing ovation to thank the Riders.

“The Riders are the only program that encompasses the Legion, Sons of The American Legion and the Auxiliary,” says Bob Sussan, chairman of the American Legion Riders Advisory Committee. “From the outset, they adopted the Legacy Scholarship Fund, and annually we ride for the children of our fallen brothers and sisters.”

When the first Legacy Run left Indianapolis and headed to Salt Lake City a decade ago, its participants set a goal of raising \$50,000. The ride netted more than three times that amount – and that was just the start. In 10 years, the Legacy Run has raised more than \$6 million for the Legacy Fund.

SELECTED RESOLUTIONS OF THE 97TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

FINANCE

3 \$5 increase in American Legion’s national per-capita dues

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

97 Endorses building of National Eisenhower Memorial

NATIONAL SECURITY

33 Supports improvements to military quality-of-life standards

36 Supports veteran status for National Guard and reserve servicemembers

40 Urges Congress to assert freedom of navigation around South China Sea island-building by China

48 States to repeal restrictive firearm legislation

60 Support for concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation

69 Medal of Honor for Patrick O. Ford

79 Medal of Honor for Dorie Miller

81 Support for public and private manned space exploration

108 Oppose Iran nuclear deal

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

64 Support for Fit to Serve VA hearing-care initiative

75 Restore VA’s informal claims and appeals process

101 Recruitment and retention within VA

102 Supports priority care for Medal of Honor recipients

103 VA to provide oversight to its fiduciary program

105 Reiteration of “System Worth Saving” program structure and purpose

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

30 Supports housing preference for low-income veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development

31 Support and strengthen the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)

93 Supports licensure and certification of servicemembers, veterans and spouses

The full text of all 49 resolutions passed at the convention is available in the Legion’s Digital Archive.

 archive.legion.org, click on “Resolutions”



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Photo by Lucas Carter

Barnett: Legion needed ‘more than ever’

Before his election as national commander of The American Legion, Dale Barnett knew his slogan needed to be inspiring and personally meaningful.

“Duty, honor, country – these three words have great meaning to my life, and I hope this year they will have great meaning to you,” the retired Army officer and West Point graduate told convention delegates on Sept. 3.

A member of Post 105 in Fayetteville, Ga., and past Department of Georgia commander, Barnett attended Hoosier Boys State in 1969, which he said inspired him to apply to and eventually attend the U.S. Military Academy.

“The American Legion has shaped my life,” he said.

One of Barnett’s key initiatives is conducting “walks for veterans” across the nation, intended to raise awareness about the Legion’s presence and power in its communities. He wants the walks to include Legion Family members, young people participating in Legion programs and their families, Scouts and local high school JROTC units, as well as community leaders and the general public.

“We walk for veterans each and every day in our communities,” Barnett said. “We mentor our kids. We do things for our community. I want to walk with all the people we touch, and that’s a lot of people.”

His fundraising project is the Legion’s National Emergency Fund (NEF), which provides financial help to members of the Legion Family who are affected by natural disasters. “I would like to see us raise \$1 million this year for the NEF because it does so much for so many people,” he said.

Barnett also plans to emphasize membership. His post has grown from 81 to 307 since he joined the organization in 1996.

“Our communities need The American Legion now more than ever,” he said. “Do not hesitate to ask someone to join our great organization.”



SAL National Commander Kevin Collier, National Commander Dale Barnett and American Legion Auxiliary National President Sharon Conatser celebrate their elections. Photo by Lucas Carter



Watch convention highlights online

See some of the 97th National Convention’s best moments, including:

- Kelly Shackelford, Liberty Institute president and CEO, on efforts to preserve veterans memorials
- Scott Stump on the progress of the National Desert Storm War Memorial
- The band and color guard competitions
- The Patriotic Memorial Service

 www.legion.org/legiontv

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Customer Rating
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comp at \$69.99

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Columbus, Ga.

National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Ben Adams
Marion County Sheriff's Office
Ocala, Fla.

National Firefighter of the Year

Steven Brune
West Point Volunteer Rescue
West Point, Neb.

Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy

For greatest activity in use of The American Legion School Medal Awards
Department of Maryland

Daniel J. O'Connor Americanism Trophy

For best all-around Americanism activities
Department of Ohio

Consolidated Post Report Winners

Departments of Florida, Georgia, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Virginia, Wisconsin

Frank N. Belgrano Jr. Trophy

For support of Boy Scouts of America
Department of California

Fourth Estate Award

Print
USA Today
McLean, Va.



Photo by Lucas Carter

Broadcast
CNN
Atlanta

New Media
CBS News
New York City

Employer of the Year
For companies and businesses dedicated to hiring veterans

Small Business
Veteran Energy
Houston

Mid-Sized Business
Frito-Lay
Austin, Texas

Large Business
Home Depot
Atlanta

Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons Award
Bobby Dodd Institute
Atlanta

Employer of Older Workers Award
Sturdevants Auto Parts
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Homeless Veterans Outreach Award
Bob Looby
Department of New Jersey
Trenton, N.J.

Employment Service Local Office Award
OhioMeansJobs

Columbus-Franklin County Center
Columbus, Ohio

Local Veterans Employment Representative of the Year
Frankie Billingsley
Fort Wayne, Ind.

O.L. Bodenhamer Trophy
No. 1 in membership at June report
Department of Georgia

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist of the Year
Linda "Michele" Scuito
Texas Veterans Commission, Lufkin, Texas

Garland D. Murphy Jr. Award
Based on actual contributions received during the 2014-2015 American Legion Child Welfare Foundation year
Department of Florida

William F. Lenker National Service Trophy
For best supporting and implementing programs to benefit veterans and their families
Department of Ohio

U.S. "Udie" Grant Legacy Award

Based on combined total donations of American Legion Family to the Child Welfare Foundation
Department of Florida

Color Guard Contest
Military Class
Dorie Miller Memorial Post 331
Orlando, Fla.

Military Open Class
Newport Harbor Post 291
Newport Beach, Calif.

Senior Open Class
Oak Orchard Riverdale Post 28
Millsboro, Del.

Advancing/Retrieving Colors
Rowan County Veterans Honor Guard
Salisbury, N.C.

SPIRIT OF SERVICE AWARDS

AIR FORCE

Senior Airman Richard Baskerville III

NAVY

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Fredelyne Dolores

COAST GUARD

Yeoman 2nd Class Casey Lawrence

MARINE CORPS

Sgt. Stephen Little Jr.

ARMY

Sgt. Danielle Salley

2015 YOUTH CHAMPIONS

ORATORICAL CHAMPION

Geeta Minocha
Ocala, Fla.

BOYS NATION PRESIDENT

Aravind Byju
Sarasota, Fla.

EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR

Ethan Copple
Elkhorn, Neb.

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

SPORTER CHAMPION
Adam McClintock
Tucson, Ariz.

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

PRECISION CHAMPION
Rhian Travis
Poolville, Texas

2014 BASEBALL PLAYER

OF THE YEAR
Sean Breen
Brooklawn, N.J.

2014 BASEBALL ALL-

ACADEMIC TEAM CAPTAIN
Matthew Walsh
East Weymouth, Mass.



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FRONT

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Roster for a new Legion year



GEORGE CUSHING
National Vice Commander, Western Region
HOME: Glendale, Ariz.
MEMBERSHIP: 30 years, Post 29

MILITARY SERVICE: Army,

1960-1963; Army Reserve, 1963-1974; Army National Guard, 1974; Air National Guard, 1985-1994

OCCUPATION: Retired quality engineering specialist

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Post cmdr., dist. cmdr., dept. vice cmdr., dept. cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: Cemetery Cmte., Legislative Cncl., Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn., Veterans Benefits Cmte.

REGION: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Mexico, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Philippines, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

OCCUPATION: Projects manager

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Post adj., post cmdr., dist. cmdr., dept. vice cmdr., dept. cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: Alt. National Executive Cmte., National Executive Cmte., Foreign Relations Cncl., VA&R Cncl.

REGION: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin



JAMES COPHER SR.
National Historian
HOME: Mound, Minn.
MEMBERSHIP: 44 years, Post 398
MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1964-1968

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Post cmdr., district cmdr., dept. cmdr., dept. historian

NATIONAL POSITIONS: National Association of Department Historians of The American Legion (NADHAL) president



JOHN HARGREAVES
National Vice Commander, Northeast Region
HOME: East Boothbay, Maine
MEMBERSHIP: 34 years, Post 132

MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1968-1969

OCCUPATION: Retired accountant

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Dept. cmdr., dept. vice cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: Americanism Cncl., Distinguished Guests Cmte., National Executive Cmte., Foreign Relations Cncl., National American Legion Press Association, National Security Cncl.

REGION: Connecticut, Delaware, France, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont



THE REV. DR. H.C. TED KELLEY
National Chaplain
HOME: Camp Hill, Pa.
MEMBERSHIP: 55 years, Post 40
MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1953-1956; Navy, 1962-1983

OCCUPATION: Clergyman

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Dept. chaplain



ALAN DAVIS SR.
National Vice Commander, Midwest Region
HOME: Princeton, Minn.
MEMBERSHIP: 47 years, Post 347
MILITARY SERVICE: Navy, 1966-1969

OCCUPATION: Retired computer specialist

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Dept. adj., dept. cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: Americanism Cncl., Americanism Cmsn., Membership & Post Activities Cmte.

REGION: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota



JIMMY LANE
National Vice Commander, Southeast Region
HOME: Jonesboro, Ark.
MEMBERSHIP: 14 years, Post 21
MILITARY SERVICE: Air

Force, 1962-1968

OCCUPATION: Retired

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Post adj., post cmdr., dist. cmdr., dept. vice cmdr., dept. cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: National Security Cncl.

REGION: Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia



DANIEL ZIMMERMANN
National Sergeant-at-Arms
HOME: Douglasville, Ga.
MEMBERSHIP: 31 years, Post 145
MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1974-1992

OCCUPATION: Retired teacher



DAVID GOUGH
National Vice Commander, Central Region
HOME: Darlington, Wis.
MEMBERSHIP: 27 years, Post 214
MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1966-1968



DEWEY MOSS
Aide to the National Commander
HOME: Dalton, Ga.
MEMBERSHIP: 7 years, Post 112
MILITARY SERVICE: Army, 1966-1968
OCCUPATION: Retired CEO

LEGION HIGHLIGHTS: Post adj., post cmdr.

NATIONAL POSITIONS: Americanism Cncl.

NEW

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Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
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U.S. Navy photo



DVIDS

VETERANS DAY 2015

“Better than honor and glory, and history’s iron pen, Was the thought of duty done and the love of his fellow-men.”

From “Sherman,” by Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), an American poet who served as a Union soldier during the Civil War

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A GREAT WAY OF LIFE

Football's Ron Rivera on the advantages of growing up military.

BY MARK SEAVEY



Carolina Panthers coach Ron Rivera, son of an Vietnam War Army veteran and Legionnaire, says a military upbringing shaped his career as a football player and coach. Photo by Abbi O'Leary

Carolina Panthers head football coach Ron Rivera doesn't so much enter a room as he does burst through the doors as if they were offensive linemen trying unsuccessfully to keep him from their quarterback.

It's no surprise. Rivera, after all, was an All-American linebacker at the University of California-Berkeley, before the Chicago Bears selected him in the second round of the 1984 NFL Draft. He was the first man of Puerto Rican descent to play on a Super Bowl championship team, when the Bears demolished the New England Patriots 46-10 in 1985.

What isn't as commonly known is that Rivera is the son of

an Army officer and proud Legionnaire, and growing up in a military family shaped the man and coach he is today.

"My father, Eugenio, was a chief warrant officer fourth grade," Rivera says. "He served 32 years. He joined when he was in Puerto Rico and was pretty much assigned all over the United States, but our home base was Fort Ord, Calif. That's where my three brothers and I all were born.

"It was a great way of life for him, and it was a great way of life for my family. We really enjoyed growing up that way. When you move around as much as we did, your best friends are your brothers."

Rivera's family lived on military bases in Germany, Panama, Washington, D.C., and Maryland before settling in for a longer stretch in Monterey, Calif. There, he attended Seaside High School, where he played football, basketball and baseball.

Growing up, Rivera and his brothers were taught what he likes to call the military "way of life," summed up in three simple rules:

- Be on time. It shows commitment.
- Pay attention, so others know you know how.
- Play hard, so you know you can be counted on.

"We learned that if you follow these three rules, you'll build trust with the man in the foxhole, and the man in the foxhole will trust you," he says.

That upbringing set the tone for Rivera's remarkable career – nine seasons as a player with the Bears and nearly 20 years as a coach.

"Football is what has helped me clarify the difference between a dream and a vision," he says. "A dream is what you hope for and what you wish for; a vision is what you plan out and execute. That's the stuff that our dad taught us: you should have a plan, you should have an idea as to how you want to attack the problem."

In 1992, Rivera retired from playing professional football. For four years, he covered the Chicago Bears and college football as a television analyst for WGN and SportsChannel Chicago. Still, he wasn't content staying on the sidelines.

"I was miserable, and my wife knew I was," Rivera says. "I was coaching our son in pee-wee football, and I was always talking about coaching, and she looked at me and said, 'You need to get back in it, because you have no structure in your life. When you were growing up, your dad was getting you up at 6:30 every morning. Then you got into the NFL and you got up every morning at 6 o'clock to work out and get ready for games and all that stuff. You were regimented for such a big part of your life, and that part is missing.' Transitioning into coaching was really just an extension of growing up military."

In 1997, Rivera joined the Bears as a defensive quality control coach. From there, he worked as the Philadelphia Eagles' linebackers coach and returned to the Bears as a defensive coordinator in 2004; the team's NFC championship win and appearance in Super Bowl XLI in 2006 put Rivera on the radar of several NFL teams as a potential head coach.

He joined the Panthers as a rookie head coach in 2011, inheriting a 2-14 team. Three years later, Carolina became the first repeat champion in the NFC South since 2002.

Rivera and his wife, Stephanie, care about military and

veterans issues, supporting events for the USO in North Carolina. They buy tickets for, and host, a military family at every Panthers home game. In addition, Rivera speaks out about the importance of employers hiring veterans, who he believes have all the training and discipline to make great employees – and even greater leaders.

In an interview with USAA, Rivera shared his thoughts about the advantages of a military upbringing.

"I'd like to believe that if you paid attention and really watched what your parent or parents went through as a soldier, you understand a lot sooner than other kids what it means to be an American," he says. "You are taught self-sacrifice early, you are taught to do things for the greater good a lot sooner, and you understand the significance of making a commitment and giving your all. When you hear people talk about being brought up in an environment where you learn early on about commitment, teaching and sacrificing, that shapes who you are. I think that's a bonus for coaches because you know young people like that are even more committed."

Though he's proud of what he's accomplished in his life, Rivera's not one to live off past successes; there's still a lot he wants to do, and he knows it's up to him to make it happen. As he likes to say, "If you want something in life, go get it, because they are not going to send the limo."

Mark Seavey is new media manager for The American Legion.

RON RIVERA

Born Jan. 7, 1962

Family Rivera and his wife Stephanie, a former assistant coach for the WNBA's Washington Mystics, have two children, Christopher and Courtney.

College University of California-Berkeley. Consensus All-American linebacker, and once held his school's all-time sack and career tackle records. Rivera still holds the Cal record for most tackles for loss in a season, which he set in 1983. He was a 1983 Lombardi Award finalist and MVP of the 1984 East-West Shrine Game.

Professional career Selected in the second round of the 1984 draft by the Chicago Bears, he became the starter in 1988 and played for three more seasons, retiring as a player in 1992.

Coaching career Chicago Bears defensive quality control coach (1997-1998), Philadelphia Eagles linebackers coach (1999-2003), Chicago Bears defensive coordinator (2004-2006), San Diego Chargers linebackers coach (2007), San Diego Chargers defensive coordinator (2008-2010), Carolina Panthers head coach (2011-present)

Honors and awards AP NFL Coach of the Year (2013), University of California, Berkeley Sports Hall of Fame (1994)

Watch the video interview:  www.legion.org/legiontv

BUSINESS

How to get your business off the ground

ASK THE VETREPRENEUR



MARK ROCKEFELLER

Q: *I have a great business idea and a business plan. What do I do next?*

A: Don't quit your day job just yet. Continue working on your business idea on the side, like at night and on the weekend. Your business plan is a great starting point, but it will start changing on Day 1. It's OK to deviate from your plan and tinker a bit to see what works and what doesn't. If

you get some traction and can't keep up with demand, it may be time to consider making your new venture your full-time priority.

If you're transitioning out of the military and are eager to start your own business, I recommend checking out VetToCEO. It offers a seven-week program called Entrepreneurship for Transitioning Warriors that teaches veterans how to take the skills learned in combat and apply them directly to business.

Q: *I've started my own business, but I have no idea where to find mentors or resources.*

A: There are many wonderful programs, incubators and resources available for veteran entrepreneurs; you should never feel you have to go through the process of starting a business alone.

For veteran business owners in the Washington, D.C., area wanting to break into government contracting, Eastern Foundry is a veteran-owned co-working space and accelerator for startups and small businesses. They provide mentors, professional service providers and business-development support teams that offer structured and personalized coaching for the businesses housed in their shared space.

The Bunker is another great program built by veteran entrepreneurs for veteran entrepreneurs. It targets existing veteran-owned tech startups and aspiring entrepreneurs to "come, create and conquer" the business world. They have several locations around the United States.

For more veteran resources, I recommend checking out Vets in Tech (ViT), Vet-Tech and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University.

Mark Rockefeller is an entrepreneur, attorney and veteran. He is the co-founder and CEO of StreetShares, an online marketplace where investors compete to provide shares of commercial loans to small businesses.

Follow Rockefeller on Twitter @markrockefeller or StreetShares @StreetShares

Have a question? Send it to him at questions@streetshares.com.



Photo courtesy Mona Hamilton

CENTENNIAL

Post 654, Waterman, Ill.

Paul Eakle, a World War I veteran and charter member of American Legion Post 654 in Waterman, Ill., had a fondness for the battleship USS *New Jersey*, which brought him and many other U.S. troops home from Europe. He put his impressions on paper and created a small model.

In 1934, with lumber he'd bought on credit and the help of other Post 654 members, Eakle built an even larger ship model for use as a parade float. Naming it USS *Illinois*, for his home state, Paul took the ship to several American Legion national conventions, including San Francisco in 1946 and New York in 1947. In the days before interstate highways, this was quite a feat.

After Eakle's death in 1953, the float was dismantled but not forgotten. His son-in-law constructed a scale model for use by Eakle's daughter, who served as an Auxiliary district director in 1962 and 1963.

Share your post's legacy

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

 www.legion.org/centennial

LEGION CHARITIES

Donate a vehicle to help Legion programs

Owners of unused vehicles have the opportunity to donate them for tax breaks while also benefiting American Legion programs.

The American Legion Vehicle Donation Program accepts all types of vehicles: cars, trucks, vans, SUVs, boats, motorcycles, RVs and more. Proceeds from each auction sale via Insurance Auto Auctions (IAA), Inc., will go toward American Legion charities and programs.

IAA accepts vehicles in almost any condition, whether they can be driven or not, in all 50 states.

Those wishing to donate a vehicle should fill out a form online at www.legion.org/donate/auto or call (844) 353-4466. You will be contacted within 48 hours for pickup arrangements, at no cost.

If you have questions about the donation program, such as when you'll receive your tax receipt or if you need your vehicle title, visit www.legion.org/donate/auto/faq for answers.



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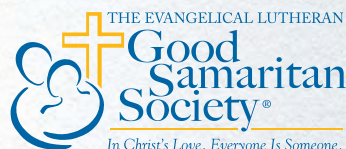
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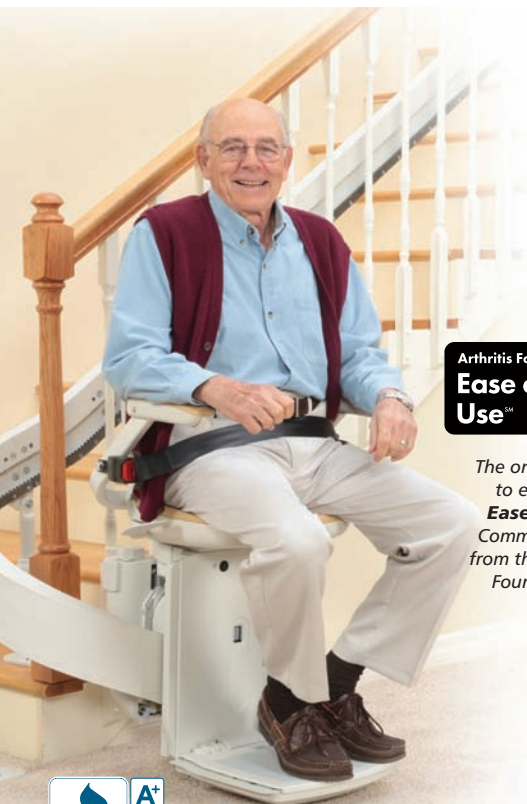
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ACTIVE DUTY

From football pads to rucksacks

Glen Coffee left college early to play in the NFL. Then, after a successful season under his belt with the San Francisco 49ers and a promising career ahead of him, he left the NFL early to serve in the Army.

"I figured if I got paid to play football, I would tolerate it," Coffee told *The Washington Post*. "So I got to the NFL and I got the money, and it was mo' money, mo' problems, pretty much. And I found out it wasn't for me."

The former running back, 28, is now a paratrooper serving in the waterborne-operations section of the Army Ranger School's installation at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., training elite soldiers.

"Not everyone can serve in combat arms," he told the *Post*. "So that's why I joined. I felt like I was able to do it."

DEFENSE

Carrier gap in the Gulf

The United States has not had an aircraft carrier deployed in the Persian Gulf for a two-month stretch this fall – the first time that has occurred since 2007, as *Stars and Stripes* reports. Adm. John Richardson, the new chief of naval operations, calls the absence of carrier firepower "a detriment to our capability."

Indeed, given operations underway against ISIS and on-again-off-again tensions with Iran, Washington has come to count on carriers to send a deterrent message and deliver ordnance in and around the Gulf. In fact, when USS *Theodore Roosevelt* was deployed in the Gulf, it contributed "about one-third of the aircraft sorties supporting Operation Inherent Resolve," according to *Stars and Stripes*. Earlier, the carrier USS *George H.W. Bush* was rushed to the Gulf to provide some of the very first counterstrikes against ISIS.

"We don't have the flexibility to have a carrier there if we need one, because we just don't have them," Bryan Clark of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments told *Stars and Stripes*.

BY THE NUMBERS

40,000

Soldiers cut from active-duty ranks in 2015

1.36 million

Active-duty U.S. military personnel

744,000

Civilian employees at the Pentagon – a 6 percent increase since 2010

730,000

DoD civilian contractors – a 20 percent increase

1.47 million

DoD civilian contractors and civilian employees

Source: Mackenzie Eaglen/American Enterprise Institute



VERBATIM

He is a walking, talking parable. This is a pope who looks at the world from the bottom up and from the outside in. I think he brings to Congress and the White House a different perspective than they are used to hearing.

John Carr, director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University, on Pope Francis' trip to the United States in September. During his first visit to the country, the pope met with President Obama, addressed Congress, and celebrated Mass in Washington, Philadelphia and New York.

Source: CNN

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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

The great Yogi Berra remembered

Lawrence Peter “Yogi” Berra, 90, one of the most prominent figures in Major League Baseball history, passed away Sept. 22.

The MLB legend played almost his entire 19-year baseball career (1946-1965) with the New York Yankees, leading the team to five straight World Series titles. As a player, he appeared in 14 MLB World Series and won 10, totaling 75 Series games and a record 71 hits. The three-time American League Most Valuable Player and 18-time All-Star was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972.

Born in St. Louis, Berra got his famous nickname when a friend claimed he resembled a Hindu yogi in a movie. In his youth, Berra played on three organized baseball teams, including Fred W. Stockholm American Legion Post 245. In an interview with *The American Legion Magazine* in April 1999, Berra said he “loved American Legion ball” because he was able to travel. “I thought, ‘If you make it to the big leagues, you get to travel to all them cities.’ I never would’ve left St. Louis without The American Legion.”

Berra joined the Navy in 1943 and served as gunner’s mate on USS *Bayfield* during the D-Day invasion. “I was on a rocket boat,” Berra said. “We went in before the Army went in. We stayed off about 400 yards from the beach and fired the rockets in.”

After leaving the Navy in 1946, Berra played minor league baseball with the Newark Bears in New Jersey, as a catcher. With just two weeks left in the season, his dream of playing professional baseball came true when he received a call to join the Yankees.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Tehran caught

After signing a deal aimed at delaying the development of its nuclear-weapons program, the Iranian government has been caught “sanitizing its suspected nuclear military site at Parchin,” Josh Rogin and Eli Lake of Bloomberg News report, citing satellite evidence the U.S. intelligence community has shared with Congress.

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called the reports “troubling” and said the incident raises “a lot of concerns.” Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., added, “I have concerns about the vigorous efforts by Iran to sanitize Parchin.”

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

German military dwindles

Writing in *The National Interest*, defense analyst Kyle Mizokami recently detailed the collapse of Germany’s military strength. Given the important role Germany has played in NATO’s defense – and the deteriorating situation in Russia – it’s a worrisome picture.

■ Only 42 of Germany’s 109 top-of-the-line Eurofighters are in flying condition. Most are grounded due to lack of spare parts. Just as bad, Germany has “halved annual flying hours for air crews.”

■ Of the 357 aging Tornado fighter-bombers Germany acquired during the Cold War, only 89 remain. Thirty-eight are operational.

■ At the height of the Cold War, West Germany had 2,125 Leopard II tanks. Today, the German army has just 225.

VERBATIM

The Army needs a leader who will stand up for soldiers, who recognizes war can get ugly and who won’t shy away from the tough issues. If Fanning is that type of person, he’ll be embraced.

Joe Kasper, chief of staff to U.S. Rep. Duncan D. Hunter, R-Calif., on President Obama’s nomination of Eric Fanning to serve as Army secretary. A specialist on national security issues who has helped oversee some of the Pentagon’s biggest weapons programs, Fanning would be the first openly gay civilian secretary of a U.S. military branch. He previously served as acting Air Force secretary and deputy undersecretary of the Navy, and has been acting undersecretary of the Army since June. *Source: CNN*



AGING IS NATURAL, GIVING UP ON YOUR VIRILITY ISN'T!

**BRING BACK THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE
... HERE'S HOW ONE MAN DID IT!**

Although this would otherwise be an embarrassing subject – I feel strongly about sharing my recent experience with others my age. Simply put, **I'm 57 years old and even though I'm in good health overall, my body just doesn't respond like it used to.** Intimacy and virility have become an issue.

Recently, I found myself struggling to "perform" - I began losing my confidence, and with it, my sense of "male prowess". I was feeling a great deal of pressure and embarrassment, my wife was beginning to think it was something she did or didn't do – it wasn't.

I wasn't comfortable discussing my situation with anyone – not even my doctor – so in a desperate attempt to find some help, I privately did some research on the web.

First, I found that many **HEALTHY** men experience a decrease in virility with age. **I wasn't alone!** Good blood circulation is the key to maintaining virility, and there are a number of factors that can weaken it.

Armed with this new information, I began to search through the many "male enhancement" products on the net. I found a pill and patch for everything and anything, but **one product stood out among them - PROZEMAX is completely different – not a pill or a patch, this surprisingly effective topical formula is delivered directly to the "source" – where I needed it most.** Best of all, **PROZEMAX is recommended by a Leading Physician**, and you don't need a prescription. I don't need to swallow a pill, prescription or not, or wear some kind of patch on my shoulder!

After trying **PROZEMAX** just once, I could actually feel it working immediately, it felt incredible! **I LITERALLY STARTED FEELING IT IN UNDER 60 SECONDS!** What a difference! I couldn't believe it - virility like I haven't felt in years! My driver's license says I'm 57, but thanks to **PROZEMAX**, my wife says I'm 18 again! It feels great! I now know it's normal to experience some problems with virility at my age, but **PROZEMAX** let me deal with it naturally. No pills – no patches – and even better – no embarrassing appointment with the doctor.

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Take old retirement plan to new job

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

The average baby boomer has had 11 jobs during his or her working life.

I'm not one, but I'm close enough that when I stumbled upon that figure in a Bureau of Labor Statistics report, it grabbed my attention.

I've been blessed, I think, to have jumped jobs fewer times. But over the years I've heard a lot of questions

from people trying to figure out what to do with retirement plans they've left behind as they've switched jobs.

Thankfully, your options are pretty straightforward no matter how many times you have switched employers. Essentially, you have five. The key is to understand those options and the implications of one choice over another. Whether you've moved three times or 33, make sure, by choosing well, that your changes are not handicapping your long-term retirement plans.

■ **Cash out.** I usually hold this until the end as an afterthought and an always-avoid alternative. But truth be told, this is the one I get the most questions about. So I listed it first, solely for that reason; I still think you should avoid it. Above and beyond the taxes and potential early-withdrawal penalties, this move – especially when repeated nearly a dozen times – is a recipe for missing your retirement goals.

■ **Leave it.** Most plans require a minimum balance, but beyond that, if you've got a plan you like with investment options and expenses that suit, there's nothing wrong with staying put. Of course, you'll want to keep up with the old plan and how it fits into your overall portfolio.

■ **Roll it to a Roth IRA.** This move could pay big dividends in the form of tax-free retirement income, but it's one you shouldn't make without consulting your tax adviser. If you only have a Roth 401(k), keeping the money under the tax-free Roth IRA umbrella could be an apples-to-apples adjustment. However, moving money from a traditional employer plan to a Roth IRA will require you to pay tax on the money that hasn't been taxed. That could cost you big bucks.

■ **Roll it to a traditional IRA.** If you don't like the employer plan, want a wider array of investment options or desire a single consolidated account to pull together all your old retirement plans, consider this option. Setting up a traditional IRA as your "retirement hub" might be ideal. Do it in the form of a direct rollover, which goes from the old plan to your IRA instead of coming through you. That allows you to avoid potential tax headaches and mandatory withholding, which you would have to make up yourself to avoid taxes and potential penalties on the money withheld.

■ **Roll it to your new employer plan.** This may be where the bulk of your new contribution efforts are going, so if it's a good plan you may want to consolidate all your old plans with your new employer. However, if you see another 11.7 moves in your future, maybe not.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances



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SOCIAL MEDIA

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PINTEREST

The Legion's boards are filled with patriotism, history and other inspirations.

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INSTAGRAM

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Show your military support with the Buzz Cut Challenge

The American Legion has joined forces with Great Clips, the nation's largest hair salon brand, to support veterans, military members and their families by encouraging people nationwide to participate in the Buzz Cut Challenge.



Great Clips and The American Legion will hold #BuzzCutChallenge community-based events in more than a dozen cities across the country from Nov. 2-10. For a suggested donation of \$10 at these events, Great Clips stylists will provide buzz cuts to attendees willing to let their hair hit the floor to support veterans and their families. Local event details will be added to www.legion.org/buzzcut, as available.

People not near a Buzz Cut Challenge event can also take part in the challenge. Just get a buzz cut and post a photo or video to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #BuzzCutChallenge. Participants are encouraged to tag their friends and family to extend the challenge.

Not up for a buzz cut? You can support veterans, military members and their families by donating at one of the Buzz Cut Challenge events or online at www.legion.org/buzzcut.*

* Donations are accepted only at a Buzz Cut Challenge event or online at www.legion.org/buzzcut.

EDUCATION



Free VA transition-counseling program

Q: *I was recently discharged from the Marine Corps, and my transition from military to civilian life has been challenging. What resources could provide me some guidance for the next chapter in my life?*

A: VA offers free educational and career counseling (Chapter 36) services for transitioning servicemembers who are:

- Within six months of discharge from active duty.
- Within one year after discharge from active duty.
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Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and a member of American Legion Post 27 in Arizona. askvalerie@legion.org

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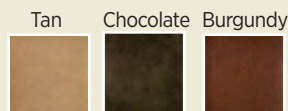
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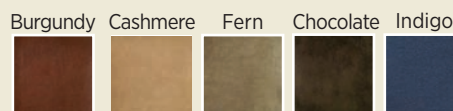
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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

355th Ftr Grp Assn, Tucson, AZ, 3/2-6, Bill Cook, (330) 541-2653, bigbill355fa@aol.com;
408th MMS (Royal Thai AFB, Ubon, Thailand), Washington & Cruise, 7/6-8, John Farmer, (410) 599-3322, mugaipass@yahoo.com; **664th AC&W**, Bellefontaine, OH, 6/24-26, Billy Stafford, (937) 592-2306, wildbill@columbus.rr.com

ARMY

15th Med Bn 1st Air Cav Div, Olympia, WA, 4/11-18, Larry Hatch, (360) 491-6486, camping-out@comcast.net; **88th Trans Co (An Khe, Vietnam)**, La Porte, IN, 3/11-12, Butch Weston, (219) 785-4296, rhonda_weston@yahoo.com;

169th Eng (Vietnam), Nashville, TN, 9/9-10, Becky Mallory, rmallory@roadrunner.com; **312th Evac Hosp**, Greensboro, NC, 5/21, Bill Pickard, (919) 637-9224, pickardw@campbell.edu; **359th Trans Co (Vietnam)**, Fredericksburg, VA, 5/10-14, Richard Clinton, (540) 854-7608, richardsteph67@yahoo.com; **575th Trans Co SETAF**, Hartford, CT, 4/15-17, Bob Heemstra, (951) 204-4010, info@575thtransco.org; **Avn Plt HHC 1st Bde 101st Abn Div**, Fort Myers, FL, 2/12-13, Pete Rzeminski, (708) 421-5744, pjr@pjr.net; **Battle of the Bulge Commemoration**, Washington, 12/14-17, John Bowen, (301) 384-6533, johndbowen@earthlink.net; **Const Engineers (Korean War)**, East Peoria, 8/5-7, Randy Knapp, (217) 329-2601, randy.knapp@hotmail.com

COAST GUARD

Port Security Unit 303(b) (Desert Shield/Desert Storm), New York, 5/13-15, Martin Maher, (917) 337-4723, mardot237@aol.com

JOINT

Welcome Home Vietnam Vets (Jacksonville, AR, Museum of Military History), Jacksonville, AR, 4/30, Danna Kay Duggar, (501) 241-1943, jaxmilmuseum@gmail.com

MARINES

I Co 3-7 (All Wars & Peacetime), Myrtle Beach, SC, 4/27-30, Dennis Deibert, (717) 652-1695; **Plt 217 (MCRD Parris Island, SC, Mar-May 1966)**, Beaufort, SC, 3/22-24, Jack McCormack, (631) 331-5008, oakcrest@optonline.net

NAVY

All PF Sailors, Orca AVP 49 & Station Ship Hong Kong Sailors, Albuquerque, NM, 4/19-22, Charles Toler, (225) 775-5809, cnmtoler@yahoo.com; **Altamaha CVE 18**, San Diego, 10/4-9, Dave Hoy, (207) 230-0347, ahoyther@roadrunner.com; **Belle Grove LSD 2**, Lafayette, LA, 7/10-16, Forrest Peltier, (337) 519-9468, forest@ptwinc.net; **Brinkley Bass DD 887**, Annapolis, MD, 7/27-8/1, Tom Camp, (901) 481-0583, presidentussbrinkleybassdd887@gmail.com; **Chicago CA 14/29/136 & CG 11 & SSN 721**, Pensacola, FL, 4/13-17, Sherry Butler, (405) 749-9998, dbutler@anchorengineering.net; **Compton DD 705**, Baton Rouge, LA, 4/29-5/1, Joseph Napoli, (609) 409-7678, jsnap29@gmail.com; **Donner LSD 20**, Harrisburg, PA, 4/25-27, Dennis Heimbach, (610) 775-7539, dennisheimb@gmail.com; **Halyburton FFG 40**, Charleston, SC, 7/15-17, Isaac Galford, (423) 532-7001, nfd116@gmail.com; **Horne DLG/CG 30**, San Antonio, 4/27-30, Larry Golsby, (979) 218-5829, lgool8731@yahoo.com; **Keppler DD/DDE 765**, New Orleans & Cruise, 9/24-10/1, Steve Mooney, (732) 284-0134, kepplerdd765@gmail.com; **Mullinnix DD 944**,

Cocoa Beach, FL, 4/6-10, Robert Houghton, (302) 650-3042, muxassn@hotmail.com; **NAS Brunswick, Maine**, Brunswick, ME, 9/9-11, Paul Sniffen, (732) 741-9460, paulsniffen@yahoo.com; **NAS Quonset Point, RI**, Brunswick, ME, 9/9-11, Paul Sniffen, (732) 741-9460, paulsniffen@yahoo.com; **Naval Weather Service Assn**, The Villages, FL, 5/1-6, Gerald Struck, glvsusnet@reagan.com; **NSA Da Nang**, Everett, WA, 4/4-9, Bernie Uhrinek, (724) 353-9627, jbsar@salsgiver.com; **Taylor DD/DDE 468**, Nashville, TN, 8/14-18, James O'Neill, (804) 212-8911, oneillfalm@aol.com; **Theodore Roosevelt SSBN 600**, Miami, 3/5-12, Fred Harder, hfharter@yahoo.com; **Turner Joy DD 951**, Norfolk, VA, 9/21-25, Rick Haight, (703) 489-5021, rickh20136@verizon.net; **USNTC Hall of Fame Co 442 (1959)**, Atlantic City, NJ, 9/9-12, Paul Sniffen, (732) 741-9460, paulsniffen@yahoo.com

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 27, FL: Dale Danielsen
Post 79, OH: Craig Reynolds

IN SEARCH OF

1st Mar Div E-2-11 (1953), Edward Evans, (931) 372-8488, godblessamerica@multiapro.com
1st Shoran Beacon Sqdn, K-6 (Korea, June 1954-May 1955), John Slater, (401) 632-4051
4th Div 66th Inf (Ulm, Germany, 1957-1959), Pat Tully, tully9798@aol.com
4th Inf Div D Co 1st Bn (Pleiku, Vietnam, 1968-1969), John Roman, (903) 654-8953, john997@hotmail.com
7th Inf Rgt 3rd Div I & L Cos (Korea, 1952-1954), Herbert Hilliard, (419) 589-9579
60th/503rd Eng Depot (Pusan, Korea, 1953-1955), Vic Caproni, (513) 662-4949, vscaproni@yahoo.com
67th Med Det 2nd Armd Div (Mainz, Germany, 1954-1957), Arthur Barnes, (919) 246-4335
93rd AEMS (Castle AFB, CA, 1959-1962), Joseph Halado, (773) 592-6017, hondo7011@yahoo.com
173rd Abn Bde Charlie Co (LZ Uplift, Central Highlands, Vietnam, 1970-1971), Gary Richter, (386) 423-8517, gjcrichter@aol.com
253rd Trans Det (Fort Story, VA, Aug 1963-May 1965), Jim Pollock, (727) 868-5770, jrp253fl@aol.com
278th Rgt Cbt Team (Keflavik, Iceland, Apr 1952-Apr 1953), Okey Childers, (304) 743-6264
518th AG Personnel Serv Co (Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam, 1970-1972), Gerry Pratt, (618) 357-3320, gpratt414@frontier.com
531st Ord DS (Sullivan Bks, Mannheim, Germany, 1961-1963), Kenneth Mayes, (515) 532-3378, mayeswendell@yahoo.com
743rd Railway Operating Bn (Camp Plauche, LA, Camp Robinson, AR & Europe, 1944-1946), Mark Womack, (423) 624-6948
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7101 Wiesbaden AB, Germany, Sec Police Sqdn (1972-1973), Andre Greene, 2059 McGraw Ave., Apt. 10H, Bronx, NY 10462
8224th MP Det (Inchon, Korea, 1958-1959), Donald Stimler, (217) 877-3153
B Co 1st Bn 2nd Mar Div FMF (1969-1972), Bev Richardson, (218) 940-9005, bm_richards@yahoo.com
C Co 1st Bn 4th Inf (Aschaffenburg, Germany, 1977-1980), Stan Blackwell, (410) 218-0900, stan.army1@comcast.net
SAC 450th Bomb Wing, 450th A&E (Minot AFB, ND, Jan 1963-Aug 1966), Barry Shaw, (516) 225-8436, barrymshaw0@gmail.com

TAPS

Conrad A. Chisholm, Dept. of Idaho. Dept. Cmdr. 1969-1970, Nat'l Vice Cmdr. 1977-1998, Nat'l Law & Order Cmte. Advisory Board Memb. 1965-1969, Nat'l Contests Supervisory Cmte. Memb. 1972-1980, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1974-1976, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1986-1992, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Memb. 1970-1972, Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1984-1986, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2002-2004, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1984-1986, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1998-2000, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1994-1997 and 2005-2009, and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2010-2014.
Dr. Louis J. Glekas, Dept. of District of Columbia. Dept. Cmdr. 1990-1991, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1992-1994, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1987-1988, 1989-1990, 1991-1994, 2000-2001 and 2002-2003, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1994-1996, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1995-1996, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1994-1995, Nat'l Veterans

Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Memb. 2005-2011 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Region 2 Memb. 2003-2005.

Ray Hendrix, Dept. of Georgia. Dept. Cmdr. 1977-1978, Nat'l Citizens Flag Alliance Dept. Chmn. 2004-2009, Nat'l Advisory Cmte. to Nat'l Cmdr. 2002-2011, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Memb. 2009-2013, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1999-2009, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Memb. 1986-1999, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1999-2000 and 2001-2003, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Chmn. 2003-2009, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1979-1985, Nat'l Resolutions Subcmte. Memb. 2000-2002, Nat'l Subcmte. on Cmtes. Memb. 2003-2009 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2000-2001.

Martin T. Jansen, Dept. of Wisconsin. Dept. Cmdr. 1967-1968, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1990-1995, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1968-1970, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cmsn. Memb. 1983-1986, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Chmn. 1970-1980, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 1968-1969, Nat'l American Legion Magazine Cmsn. Memb. 1980-1983 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1995-1996.

Jack L. Kilcrease, Dept. of Mississippi. Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2006-2015.

Dana Lee Orndorff, Dept. of West Virginia. Dept. Cmdr. 1980-1981, Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1973-1974 and 1975, and Nat'l Naval Affairs Cmte. Memb. 1975-1980.

R. Paul Tenney, Dept. of Vermont. Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2003 and Nat'l Historian 1995-1996.

Charles R. Towers, Dept. of Massachusetts. Dept. Cmdr. 2014-2015, Nat'l Foreign Relations Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2011-2013 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2013-2014.

Robert L. Williams Sr., Dept. of Pennsylvania. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 2000-2015.



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The trouble with being a good sport is that you have to lose to prove it.

A RESTAURANT CUSTOMER finally received his food after a long wait.

"Are you the one who took my order?" he asked the waitress.

"Yes, sir," she replied politely.

"Well, I'll be darned!" he exclaimed. "You don't look a day older!"

A MULTIMILLIONAIRE being interviewed about his self-made fortune praised his wife.

"How, exactly, did she help?" the reporter asked.

"Honestly, I was curious to find out if there was an income she couldn't live beyond."

A SMALL BOY saved his friend from drowning in an icy lake. When a TV reporter asked him what made him risk his life, he innocently replied, "He was wearing my skates."

A VOTER told a candidate, "I wouldn't vote for you if you were St. Peter himself."

"If I was St. Peter," the candidate replied, "you wouldn't be in my district."

IN FRONT OF a hospital, a car suddenly screeched to a halt. An excited young man jumped out, took the steps three at a time and ran through the door.

"What's the trouble, sir?" a nurse asked.

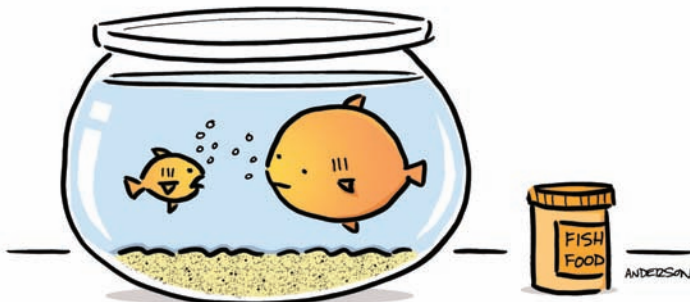
"My wife is going to have a baby," he replied.

"Well, bring her in!"

"Oh, she's not due for another month. I'm timing myself to see how fast I can get here. I've shaved off three minutes just this week."

A PARTY GUEST was droning on about his trip to the Swiss Alps. At one point, he remarked, "There I stood, with the abyss yawning before me."

"Tell me," one bored listener interjected. "Was it already yawning when you got there?"



"You don't have to share, but I have to know how you're doing it."



"You want to hear a scary bedtime story? Let me tell you about my day at work."



"You never take me anywhere."

ONE FARMER said to another, "I once made a scarecrow so terrible that it frightened every single crow off the place."

"Oh, that's nothing," the other farmer replied.

"I once made one so terrible that the crows brought back the corn they stole the year before!"

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"IT IS RUMORED that the new iPhones are going to use facial recognition technology to unlock your phone. Of course, if you live in Los Angeles the iPhone will store up to six of your previous faces."

— Conan O'Brien

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